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# CORNHILL MAGAZINE

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LORD GORELL

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# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1933.

## THE MIDVICS.

BY LORD ERNEST HAMILTON.

*From 'a critical but affectionate muster of past memories' soon to be published in book form, the CORNHILL has the early privilege of giving its readers one or two lightly touched pictures of 'Society' life, as seen from within, during the middle years of Queen Victoria's reign when Dukes were Dukes indeed and Chesterfield House still played its stately part among the great houses that made Social London.*

'Old fogies sing in constant praise  
Of what they call the good old days;  
But distance—between me and you—  
Lends much enchantment to the view.'

OF course all old days are 'good old days' and ever have been since the damp winter evenings long ago when Japhet told his open-mouthed grandchildren of all the wonders that had been before the Flood. No old days can be otherwise than good old days, for they stand out as gilt-framed diaries of a time when the lame and the fat and the bald could run and jump and gallop and swim from morn till dewy eve and, in the dewy eve, quaff the red wine and the yellow and bask in the glad eyes either of lovely young unappreciated wives or of silk-tighted Gaiety sirens, according to taste, and with never a thought for the morrow and with less than a thought for the far-off days—impossibly far off in the spring-time of life—when the pitcher would be broken at the fountain and the grasshopper become a burden and all the melancholy rest of it. No wonder old fogies paint those days in bright colours, as they limp along the Piccadilly pavement. It was not ever thus with them. Gadzooks! No. That same Piccadilly pavement could tell a spicy tale or two, and so could the Argyle Rooms and Sandown and Melton and Thingummy House and So-and-So Hall; and so too—if we slip half a mile down from Piccadilly to the Savoy—could old Lady Buzby sitting over there like a 3rd Dynasty mummy and glaring through her pince-nez at Reggie and Daphne foxtrotting in the offing, as though they presented some noisome picture of modernism and as though she herself had never left her bedroom door on the latch as a token of goodwill to Bobbie Carthew. Well, well; she could leave it gaping

wide in a Trappist Monastery now and yet sleep in peace. Oh, yes; those were the good old days all right.

When, however, a survivor of the long past takes up his pen to write of the days that have been, he will certainly miss his point if he stops at any corners to sob over the grim passage of time and the buckling up of joints, for, sob as he may, time always does pass and always has and always will, and, with its passing, joints have a way of buckling up most damnably. There is no sense, but very much the contrary, in his looking down the long vista through the glasses of vain regret. That will get him nowhere, but it will be pretty sure to get his book into the nearest waste-paper basket. He has got to land right in the middle of the days he writes about, just as an elderly sleeper in his dreams sometimes lands in the middle of his schooldays without raising so much as an eyebrow of surprise among the little fellows by whose side he bravely limps up to School.

So here we are, let us say, right in the middle of the silly 'Sixties (as meaningless an alliteration, by the way, as the naughty 'Nineties). The room in which we find ourselves is the Morning Room of Selworth Park. Outside the windows is a formal garden, at the moment in possession of four languid gardeners, and in which none of the occupants of the Morning Room take any but a long-distance interest. An immense oblong mirror rears its unsightly bulk from the mantel-piece; the wallpaper is white, spangled with shiny gold monograms. Down the corners of the room run laths, also of shiny gold. The chairs are all chintz-covered and look very fresh and sweet. On the round table, with its plush cover, fringed with little dangling balls, are two bound volumes of the *Leisure Hour*, a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a handsomely bound volume of *Heath's Picturesque Annual*, and a circular board filled with glass *solitaire* balls—also a good deal of needlework in moderate confusion. The beautiful marble mantelpiece is almost completely effaced by a red baize-covered board, from the edge of which dangles a fringe of twisted cords.

In the centre of this mantelboard is a gilt French clock of hideous design, shielded from heaven knows what by a large dome of glass. The clock does not go. That type of clock never does go. It is flanked by two extremely pretty cylindrical vases of Sèvres china, one of which holds paper spills and the other cedar-wood spills. These constitute the only machinery in the room for lighting candles, for there are no matches. Matches were held

by the ancients to be a standing danger, not so much to the building itself or the furniture, as to the spreading skirts and petticoats of the ladies; and, as no one ever smoked—except in dungeons and other remote corners set aside for the purpose—there was really no need for matches. When we wanted to light candles for the piano or the writing-table we took one candle to the fireplace, lighted it with a spill and carried it back, very upright, to where it belonged. If we were economical, we blew out the spill and replaced the residue in the Sèvres vase. Then we lighted the other candle from it. Safety first and no spilled wax was the order of the day. Among other characteristic features of this overcrowded room are a number of very small chairs of extraordinary shapes, such as no human being could possibly sit on; no attempt at period decoration; beautiful pictures, beautiful china, hob-nobbing with lodging-house 'what-nots' and tinted daguerreotypes; a third-rate fitted carpet, raspberry coloured but worn to a threadbare but respectable pallor near the windows, and—dominating all—a pleasant musty smell of dry-rot and *ruban de Bruges*.

The ladies present are in crinolines—not the Titanic affairs of Georgian days, but hoops of meeker proportions—and the men are in peg-top trousers and shapeless sacklike coats. Most of them sport whiskers but some few have moustaches. Not one is clean-shaven. Their tendency is to drawl and to affect a languid indifference to everything that is strenuous or irksome in life. They are not quite convincing. The older ladies, too, only partially emancipated from Early Victorian affectation, seem hardly to ring quite true, but the younger ones are perfectly simple and natural—sweet bread-and-butter misses, brought up on *Cushions and Corners* and on Edgeworth's *Moral Tales*—not in the least amusing but very anxious to please.

The men are making a pretence of reading *The Times*, the *Morning Post* or the *Standard*. It is only a pretence because no one of normal mentality could possibly read the papers of that day for more than five minutes and remain awake. Their dullness was sepulchral. Looking back across the years, with the *Daily Mirror* or *Express* on our knees, it is amazing that no paper should have arisen, during all those long dreary decades, that aimed at interesting its readers. The papers, over which the poor Midvics yawned in ill-concealed boredom, dealt almost exclusively with Court news, social functions and pompous, polysyllabic political speeches. There were no big-type headlines nor any subject-matter

to which the degrading term 'sensational' could, by any ingenuity, be applied. Anything bordering on the sensational, either in literature or journalism, was pushed out of sight as being beneath the notice of persons of dignity and position. It was not held to be quite in tune with the starched gentility at which the period aimed. So, in order, I suppose, to advertise their concurrence with the social gentility of the period, the daily papers remained ponderously dull. They cut out all murders, divorces, burglaries, scandals about Rectors, boxing and athletics. Such low fare was served, for those who were vulgar enough to seek for it, in the columns of the *Sportsman* and the *Sporting Life* and in the still darker records of the *Police News*, but no such low publications as these, of course, ever found their way on to the plush-covered table in the Morning Room at Selworth Park; and so the gentleman yawned and the ladies plied their needles while the hostess read aloud the names of all the great people who had been at Lady St. James's reception the night before.

Apart from its excessive gentility, which fettered its legs and handcuffed its wrists and kept perpetual blue spectacles on its nose, it was certainly a pleasant indolent life that the Midvics passed inside the high brick wall of Selworth Park, and one into which no ugly realities from outside were ever allowed to push their way—even through the columns of the daily press. The tragedies of the unsheltered were thick in those days—far thicker than now—but the noise of them rarely penetrated. It was not meant that they should penetrate. In their bird's-eye view of the social world beneath them, Victorians of the upper classes deliberately shut their eye to all the ugly facts of life. In their talk, in their books, their plays and their newspapers there were no ugly facts. They lived in a serene fool's-paradise of their own, orchestrated by nightingales and hung around with garlands of sweet-smelling flowers. Art, in the academic sense, was a stranger to them, nor had they any wish for closer acquaintance, for they found complete satisfaction in their flowers, their music, their poetry and their tales of romantic but well-muzzled love. Over these they wept and gushed in great content. 'True to life' stories—almost unknown in those days—were not even discussed in polite Society. When *Adam Bede* first came out, it was not left lying about for fear the under-housemaids might read it and fall from grace. The gesture was thoughtful and well-meant, though, as a matter of fact, most of the under-housemaids of the day could have given

poor Hettie a good many yards' start in the 'Knowledge of Good and Evil' Stakes and yet have romped home easy winners; but the simple Victorian chatelaines knew nothing of this and so, in the kindness of their souls, locked *Adam Bede* safely away—after they had read it through.

To-day under-housemaids and most other budding young things would yawn most dismally over anything so slow as *Adam Bede*. We are not shy of the ugly facts of life to-day. In our literature, we take passages in our stride that the Midvics would have reared over backwards at and never faced again. Nothing offends us now except when some mawkish writer descends to sentiment or to any mistaken appeal to the higher ideals. Then, indeed, do the little red-nailed hands fling the sloppy stuff aside and, to fill the gap so left, they dig up from modern fiction, modern films, and other intellectual sewers that used to be closed but are now open, all the ugly facts of life that they can find and dance round them. Mænad dances which are not pretty and in which it is quite certain that neither Queen Victoria nor any of her ladies-in-waiting would have joined. Well, *chacun à son goût*, as the poet observed, but don't forget, Daphne dear, that ugly thoughts make ugly faces.

However, blindfolded though Society might be to the ugly facts of the lower world, it, then as now, dearly loved its implied scandals and its suggestive whisperings, but they had, of course, to be scandals in exalted spheres—not sordid intrigues of the Luxborough Mills and Jam Factories but real aristocratic trippings. So, when the younger members of the party had gone off to play croquet or break the clay pipe in Aunt Sally's mouth, the married ladies got to work. To tell the truth, they had all been itching for the opportunity ever since breakfast, for, for a strictly straight-laced generation, such as the Midvics unquestionably were, their wholesale and, very often, quite unjustifiable attacks on connubial constancy were really remarkable. It is not too much to say that in Mid-Victorian days no family of beautiful daughters were ever allowed the parentage of their official father, if any more stimulating explanation could be engineered. A cast-iron prudery, enforced by regulation, is probably driven in self-defence to some such safety valve as this to save it from blowing up in a cloud of acid steam. Pent-up waters are quick to trickle through any gap in the embankment. In the case of the Midvics, they trickled very discreetly—not to say ashamedly—through the chinks in their straight-laced code, but they trickled interminably. The attack was never direct.

It was always launched obliquely and with a pious pretence of meaning nothing that was not quite decorous and nice. Listen, for example, to the conversation in the Morning Room at Selworth Park the moment the young people have left the room. It is started by Lady Balsam, whose head is bent deeply over her knitting.

LADY BALSAM. I see one of those Bollinger girls is going to marry Lord Bray.

MRS. PANGBOURNE. Yes. What lovely girls they all are!

LADY BLEAT (*pensively*). What a pity poor Alfred Beverley is too ill to go to the wedding! He was always such a friend of the mother's.

MRS. PANGBOURNE. What a good-looking man he was!

LADY BALSAM. Yes; and poor Lord Bollinger so very plain!

LADY BLEAT. Yes, luckily none of the girls are the least bit like him.

That would be all. None of the ladies look up from their work while speaking and all talk in dreamy, pensive tones, but they all mean the same thing. After a decent interval of silence, another veiled attack is launched in a different direction, as follows:

LADY DRAGON. Have you seen either of those Greatorex twins lately?

MRS. PANGBOURNE. No; are they as lovely as ever?

LADY DRAGON. Oh yes; quite.

LADY BALSAM. Really their likeness to Hugh Spindle is quite comical.

MRS. PANGBOURNE. Yes, I believe he saw a good deal of Mrs. Greatorex before they were born. Dr. Jenner tells me that often affects the children's appearance.

At this, all the ladies sigh mournfully, as though perplexed by the strange phenomena of nature. No ghost of a smile escapes any one of them. The American story of the nigger who chased the prospective mother had not yet been invented, but, even if it had, and had been quoted by some ribald listener, it would have provoked no symptom of laughter but only a frigid pretence of missing the point. Amiable humbugs, of course, one and all, but remember, dear reader, that it was the age of amiable humbug. When scandal-loving ladies are barred by the rules from being ill-natured, they have no refuge except in amiable humbug. Personally, I believe that much of the implied scandal was quite unwarranted, but the suggestion of it was a great comfort to the poor



Midvic ladies, hampered and bound as they were in the matter of spoken words.

According to the evidence of exhumed recollections—into which cynics will probably read a trace of sex bias—the young men did not form quite so bright a picture in the Mid-Victorian landscape as their sisters. They were young in nothing but in years. The bearing that they strained after was that of mature men of the world and this they attempted by the cultivation of whiskers and of a bored, vapid manner which sat uneasily upon them. Except as prospective husbands for the many daughters of the house, they had but little sunshine value in a country-house gathering. They took themselves too seriously. They were rather too laboriously genteel. Gentility, to be quite frank, was the unavowed aim of both sexes, old as well as young. The horrid word itself was, of course, never mentioned or even entertained in thought. Had it been associated in word, or even in thought, with the studied Midvic pose, Hell's foundations would indeed have quivered and so too would the foundations of every house from Cumberland Place to Chester Square. Refinement the Midvics might have pleaded guilty to and probably would have done so proudly. But gentility! Heaven forbid! The imputation would have been too awful. It savoured of the suburbs and of the well-meaning but slightly ridiculous population that ate and drank and slept in those long rows of stuccoed houses far out west, beyond the limits of polite perambulation. And yet there is not the slightest doubt that the word 'gentility,' ugly as it may sound, was the better fit of the two.

Now, it has been observed by wise men in many ages, that gentility, when studied and hand-reared by those who claim the right to cut out the pattern of fashionable deportment, is an ornament that sits more prettily or, at any rate, less absurdly on the gentler sex than on the sterner. A man who is too genteel wants kicking and there is no doubt—all sex bias put aside—that that is exactly what many of the young Midvic exquisites did want, even and in the same manner as male crooners on the gramophone records of to-day want kicking—often and hard and with thick boots.

The genteel pose was, I think, beyond doubt a natural rebound from the Georgian coarseness, which had preceded it, and which had so sadly marred the manners and language of the early century. The Georgians—even the later Georgians and the early Victorians—were very coarse indeed. They did coarse things and they said

coarse things; and there can be little doubt that the very proper aim of the good lords and ladies of the succeeding generation was to show what tremendous strides in gentility—I mean refinement—they had made since the days when their thirsty, free-spoken, patched, powdered and puffed forbears had gambled away their estates at Crockford's and kicked up indelicate heels at Almack's, besides making frequent jokes which would never have found their way into the pages of *Punch*.

The idea at the back of all this was, of course, quite nice and proper but—like most swings of the pendulum—it was sadly overdone. The ladies and even the men, in their eagerness to show how very refined they were, became perilously near being affected—a sin which, at the risk of being wearisome, I am bound to repeat, is always more or less forgivable in women but less forgivable in men. In their eagerness to stress their refinement, the men became almost ladylike. They spent much of their time in writing long odes to the hands and feet of ladies they admired. Feminine hands and feet were, in fact, all that they were supposed to know anything about, so they made the most of these two rather uninspiring extremities and gushed over them in verses which were quite unbelievably bad but which doubtless pleased the ladies, who were not difficult to please. What did they care about scanning and rhyming so long as pretty things were said about their hands and feet? They could doubtless have done with a little wider and less parochial praise, but then Songs of Solomon and the Nineteenth Century did not run hand in hand, and half a loaf, as we all know, is better than no bread. So they were pleased.

It is almost unnecessary to add that men who spent their time in writing stuff of this sort, were never so 'ill-bred'—as they would have called it in those days—as to mix vulgar swear-words with their small talk. No, certainly not. They never really let go, as good, honest, sturdy males should do. 'Confound' was the most desperate form of anathema allowed in the presence of ladies. 'Hang' and 'dash' were milder expressions of masculine annoyance to which irritated mankind was allowed to give free rein, but which it need scarcely be said, were never, never heard from the lips of ladies. The dreadful word 'damn' was held in reserve for the less restrained atmosphere of the hunting-field and the smoking-room. In these spheres it was considered a hearty, sporting expletive, but if—under the influence of one glass too many—let loose in the dining-room it would have raised a chorus of



genteel coughs, with raised eyebrows and many pained side-glances. When this dread word had to be written or printed, it was always suggested to the shuddering reader by the symbol 'd——n.' The equally painful word 'devil' was always eviscerated in the same way when transferred to paper, so as to soften the shock to the reader. The word, in fact, was not in the catalogue of polite speech. We never, in those days, said 'What the devil' or 'Why the devil' but always 'What the deuce' and 'Why the deuce.' It was prettier, though what it meant nobody quite knew. In the same chaste spirit, we never spoke then of 'lies,' but of 'fibs' or 'tarradiddles,' and people were never 'drunk'; they were 'tipsy' or 'intoxicated.' In fact, we were genteel, in those days, to the very tips of our fingers.

It is easier to mock than to extol. This is a basic and irrefutable truth; but it is no less true that no portrait can be drawn in true perspective unless the shading is added as well as the high lights. It is gratifying to one's softer memories to reflect that, in the case of the good Victorians—with all the shading put in—the high lights still take complete command. Charles Lever, in his many admirable novels, points a rather contemptuous finger at the starched haughtiness of the English dames, whom he compares unfavourably with the more rollicking ladies of his native land. If we are to take his valuation as a true one, the men of England, who chanced to find themselves in the neighbouring isle, cut even sorer figures than their sisters and their wives, being invariably out-riden, out-shot, out-danced, out-sung, out-joked and out-drunk by the dashing sons of Erin. In fact, by the time the reader has finished one of Lever's or of Lover's novels he finds himself wondering how such poor, spineless creatures as Englishmen can ever have accomplished anything in the world, or how anything but a jellyfish could tolerate the society of English ladies for more than five consecutive minutes.

However, fiction is one thing and real life another. The Victorian ladies were perhaps a little ultra-genteel—or let us rather say refined—but no one who remembers them will deny them a certain effortless dignity, which sat most gracefully upon them and which Lever's heroines and their mothers would have given their ears to be able to imitate and, indeed, did try very hard to imitate, but alas! not always quite successfully.

All this, however, is but a straggling excursion from the main-

track into the bordering jungle. We left our country-house party enjoying their eggs and bacon and kedgeriee in the big unspoilt Georgian dining-room at Selworth. Both sexes are dressed with great care, for it is one of the established truths of life that, in communities where the brain-pan is not over-taxed, the question of dress always assumes an exaggerated importance. *Haud aliter*, as we used to say at school, was it with our gallant Midvics and more noticeably with the gentlemen than with the ladies. These last, poor dears, were given little chance of showing themselves off to the best advantage, for they were pinched and flounced and flannel-petticoated to such an extent that their actual shape was always a matter of speculative uncertainty, and one into which no one was indelicate enough to probe, even in speculation. A cast-iron convention governed the number and nature of their draperies, which were legion. For croquet and archery, which were leisurely and deliberate recreations, no departure was allowed from fixed regulation. No one was ever allowed to take anything off in Midvic days. You might put more things on and, in fact, everyone did, on the slightest provocation, put more things on but, of the dress in which you originally emerged from your bedroom, no single fragment must on any account be shed—no, not even in fun.

When girls bathed, they had, of course, to discard all their superfluous petticoats and things and, in exchange, swathed themselves from head to heel in an impenetrable armour of thick sack-cloth and, so protected against any possible betrayal of shape, they bobbed up and down at the end of a short rope. Any man who approached within a hundred yards during this unavoidable exposure, was at once struck off the list of gentlemen. No girl could swim then, nor indeed would swimming have been possible in the heavy protective armour to which they were condemned; but, even had it been possible, any such exercise would have been sternly frowned upon by the matrons of the day, as being unlady-like and indecorous.

With such monastic restrictions keeping at bay the roving male eye, it need scarcely be said that sea-bathing had little attraction for the Florences and Evas of the day, who found nothing but boredom in the company of the old bathing women and of all the other female rope-hangers to right and left. Sea-bathing, in fact, was not an amusement in Midvic days but a rather painful road to health, prescribed by doctors as a restorative after the exhaustion of the London season.

When, after their exact ten minutes by the clock, the health-

seekers emerged from their four feet of water, their ascent of the ten steps into the bathing machine was screened off from any possible observation by a huge overhanging hood, the function of which was to conceal from the very distant males any contours which might possibly suggest that the bather was a woman. No; there were certainly no bathing thrills for the poor lasses of the 'Fifties and 'Sixties.

Men never bathed. In the first place, practically all the bathing accommodation was for women and children and, in the second place, bathing was not looked upon as a manly recreation. It was merely a hygienic practice and, as such, slightly derogatory.

Men enjoyed a little more latitude in the matter of dress than their sisters and their cousins and their aunts and, as they had nothing else to think about, they bent their entire brain power on the problem of what they were going to wear and how they could best wear it. Every young man who counted for anything or thought he counted for anything had attached to him—financially, if not sentimentally—a highly-paid scoundrel—if possible a foreigner, for that was considered rather more chic—known as his valet or, more familiarly, as his 'man.' These over-fed, under-worked, loafing parasites looked up his trains for him, took his tickets, paid his bills, charged him double what they had paid, did any thinking of which their employer was incapable, lied, drank, swindled and did everything within their reach that they ought not to have done; but, because they were considered part of a gentleman of leisure's ornamental outfit, their sins were forgiven them or, rather, one might say, deliberately overlooked—except when, as in the case of Courvoisier, they reached the point of murder.

To all the fixed historical periods to which we are able to look back, we can—with the friendly help of books of reference—trace certain lasting legacies of which we are proud and others over which we quickly draw any kindly veil that is handy. One of the many Midvic legacies for which we remain, and ought to remain, thankful is the tweed suit. I am unfortunately in a position to remember, not the infancy of the tweed suit, but its early youth. If—as I think we may—we take the pages of *Punch* as a more or less faithful record of the evolutions of dress, the tweed-suit era did not dawn upon fashionable society until well on in the 'Fifties. Prior to that, the evidence goes to show that fierce check trousers were worn, even by Prime Ministers and others of little less lustre, but always in conjunction with box-cloth or broad-cloth uppers.

All through the 'Forties, men still shot in tall hats. The tweed-suit fashion was probably the greatest break-away from established tradition in the history of dress—greater even than the reforms of Charles Fox and the Duchess of Devonshire after the French Revolution. Before the 'Fifties, country dress was no more than a mild modification of town dress, formal and absurdly unsuited to the negotiation of 'moor and fen or crag and torrent.' When the tweed fashion came along, men, in their sudden relief from the forced constriction of the past, rushed headlong to the other extreme and affected clothes of ungainly bagginess. It was quickly recognised that tweeds—or at any rate, something weather-proof and serviceable—were an almost necessary corollary to the new sporting ardour which, at that time, swept over Society. With the advent of breech-loaders and pin-fire cartridges, pheasant-shooting took on a new and far more ceremonial character than when the tall-hatted, green-coated Early-Victorian sportsman had pushed pheasants and partridges out of hedgerows with a spaniel as accomplice. For the first time pheasants were reared in quantities and driven towards the guns instead of presenting their elusive tails to them. So arose the much vilified 'battue,' to a chorus of sneers from the old brigade. The sneers, however, were swept aside as, in time, are all sneers at things new and unaccustomed and the 'battue,' as it was then universally called, even by its adherents, became the fashionable form of sport. It was a cult as serious as the Church Catechism. Immense pains were taken by the young school to prove intimacy with the new development, both in dress and in sporting jargon. It was, in its early days, an entirely artificial pose and its meticulous observance amounted almost to an affectation. The unfortunate novice who wore the wrong sort of boots or who shouted 'mark' when he should have shouted something else, was unmercifully derided as a 'muff' and hardly held up his head again during the remainder of the visit.

The new sporting, floppy tweeds were worn, not only for shooting, but in a modified form for ordinary country-house purposes. Lawn tennis and golf were, of course, as yet unknown as fashionable pursuits in England, and croquet, archery and 'Aunt Sally' called for no special costume. Cricket, of the sociable country-house type, was very popular but even this game left no loophole for any relaxation from the fixed laws of dress. The players had to appear at breakfast in ordinary clothes. On the ground a tent was erected in which they changed into flannels. But not into any kind of flannels. Oh! dear no. Uniform convention here

was as arbitrary as it was for the Queen's levee or for a stroll in Rotten Row. Every player had to wear flannel trousers and a flannel shirt, buttoned at the neck and finished off with a small bow tie. Round the waist there had to be either a belt or a sash. A player appearing in a shirt open at the throat would have caused widespread consternation among the ladies. Many would have blushed and some, doubtless, would have swooned. As to playing without a cap—well, it simply wasn't done. It would have been considered both eccentric and dangerous to health. Anyone venturing into the open without a hat in that unsophisticated age was supposed to be wantonly courting either sunstroke in summer or consumption in winter. At the close of the match, the players had once more to change back into ordinary dress before re-appearing in the house. This rule, of course, did not make for lavish washing but orthodoxy in dress had a far higher Victorian value than washing which, in any case, was a matter of no little difficulty in the bathless houses of the day.

In London, tall hats and long-tailed coats did ceaseless duty. When we rode in the Park, we put on tight blue overalls, with a broad band of braid down the seam. Wellington boots and box spurs completed the outfit and, of course, a tall hat and a tail coat. Thus accoutred, we cantered demurely down the tan, with a long rein and the stirrups under our upturned toes. Behind all the ladies and behind any man of exceptional value rode an unhappy groom, as often as not penitentially straddling a fat carriage horse. The idea, I think, was not so much for protection or even for convenience as to show that you had a groom and a livery and a horse to put them both on. Well,

'The old order changeth, yielding place to new  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,'

and one of these ways was the sudden apparition in Rotten Row, one summer morning, of a distinguished member of Society (I believe it was Hugh Lowther) careering down the tan in breeches and boots and with his feet thrust well home in the stirrups. Never shall I forget the open-mouthed consternation among the loungers on the green seats. If the offender had sat on the Ark of the Covenant he could hardly have caused a greater to-do. The people gaped upon him with their mouths. However, by the time they had managed to shut them again—which took about a week—a saner view began to prevail and, within a month, half London was following his example.

It remained, however, for King Edward to give the final death-blow to the old tall-hat brigade. When he appeared, first at Sandown and then in Rotten Row, in what was then known as a 'Homburg' hat, the age of stiff discomfort, which had survived in London long after its death in the country, faded definitely away and emancipated manhood expanded its long-confined chest with a sigh of relief.

In a world of give and take and push and pull, in which the tendency of the common man is, if possible, to take rather more than he gives and to pull rather harder than he pushes, it is not to be supposed that the Midvics—simple as they were—yielded up their superfluous cash to the professional classes without some form of *quid pro quo*. They did not. The *quid* which they expected to get and did get for their monetary *quo* was deference. In the mid-century, the days of graded deference were not yet past. Dukes did humble obeisance before royalty; that, of course. Earls stood humbly aside while Dukes brushed past them and baronets, from their inferior plane, looked up respectfully to Earls. As to the meaner fry—lawyers, parsons, doctors and the like—their heads were seldom covered or their necks unbent, but—as the good book saith—they had their reward.

In such a pleasant atmosphere of reciprocity, it may well be supposed that tradesmen and servants could always find a ready and a profitable market for adroit deference. In exchange for 'my lords' and 'Sir Georges' delivered in sufficient quantities and with becoming reverence, the gilded 'swells' of the day were content to let themselves be swindled to any extent. In other words, they bought deference and bought it at rather a high price—bad bargaining, of course, but, after all, is there anything in this at which their grandchildren need blush? No, indeed. Who are we that we should throw bricks at these honest shades because their pockets opened rather readily to the bow and the salute? Would ours, think you, have remained so immaculately closed? Would we have met the bow with a kick and the salute with a straight left? In honest sooth, I think not. Our pride may be of brass but ninety-nine per cent of our feet are of clay. How many bulls'-eyes and marbles would I myself not contentedly have allowed Burgh to abstract from my trouser pocket in return for his sublime gesture of humiliation, when our paths crossed in the byways of the big house? All, unquestionably all—even the striped ones. Is it to be supposed that whiskered 'grown-ups'



were fashioned of sterner and less responsive stuff? Of course not. They too, only too readily, yielded up their bulls'-eyes and their marbles to any and all who effected the exchange with a sufficient show of deference. A 'perfect gentleman' was one who paid everything without asking questions. The term was, of course, invented and used by the robbers, in furtherance of their general scheme of brigandage but there is no reasonable doubt that the robbed themselves thought that they acquired a certain added distinction by meeting all money calls and charges on them without investigation. To investigate accounts was the degrading practice of business men, or, in the language of the day, 'snobs.'

The last word will doubtless come as a shock to many, and yet it is idle to try and conceal the rather inglorious truth that, in the good old days, business men were contemptuously labelled snobs. They were, in fact, the only class on whom this nasty name was pinned. The snob of to-day was there all right—as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be—but he was not called a snob or considered a snob. In the terminology of this present and, no doubt, enlightened year of grace, we say, 'Blinkins is a snob,' because Blinkins is well known to have a kindly eye for Dukes and millionaires. He may be quite a pleasant fellow in other ways, but he is a snob. He can't help it. He expands just as surely when basking in the sunshine of the illustrious as he dries up in the company of the lowly. We may like him personally—and often do—for we all like to be toadied when it is done artistically, but we indulgently recognise him for what he is. He is a snob.

Very different, however, was the reading of the term in the blessed 'Sixties. It would never have occurred to any of the whiskered lords and flounced ladies of that day to speak of Blinkins as a snob. No, indeed. The term would not have seemed to them to fit at all. If they had called him anything, they would probably have called him a 'courtier'—not disparagingly but rather the contrary, for, as already remarked, deference had a very high Victorian value. It was looked upon as a proper and becoming attitude on the part of discerning persons towards those whom God—in His infinite wisdom—had placed on superior pinnacles. Those on the pinnacles smiled condescendingly on this reverential attitude and had no hard words for those who kowtowed and salaamed round the base. No; they were, on the contrary, people 'with charming manners,' 'such courtiers,' etc. And now, in our twentieth-century brutality, we call them infernal snobs! Well, well!

All this, perhaps, is not very interesting, but the really interesting feature of the social outlook of those days seems to be that the men who were considered 'snobs'—and thoroughly despised as such—were the men who worked for their living. Bankers were snobs; brewers were snobs; everyone, in fact, who in the secrecy of low, commercial retreats busied themselves with figures and accounts.

Never shall I forget the seismic upheaval that ruffled the placid waters of Society when it became known that Harry Bourke, the brother of an Earl, had actually gone on the Stock Exchange. What the Stock Exchange was no one knew very clearly, except that it was some ignoble haunt, far away East, where snobs cheated one another. What was Society to do? Harry Bourke was, personally, very popular. Were they to wipe him off the list of their acquaintances or deliberately shut their eyes to the ignominious pursuit that he had, so very inconsiderately, plunged into? Luckily the problem quickly solved itself. The lead that Harry Bourke had so bravely given was quickly followed by others who had for long been chafing under the enforced stagnation of brain which the Midvics associated with the word 'gentleman.' Soon there was quite a rush of well-dressed young men hurrying Eastward in the mornings.

So died unlamented the old idea of the nobility of idleness. Men of fashion began for the first time to try and get some sort of service out of the brains that their long, brilliantined locks concealed. The brains, atrophied by long disuse, did not at first respond very freely, but the grey matter was there all the time, though stiff from want of exercise, and, after a time, it began to take on a certain mildewed activity, soon to blossom out into real intelligence, comparable even to that of the lately despised but now thoroughly whitewashed snobs. The professional classes viewed the new development with a certain dismay. If gentlemen became stock-brokers, what was to prevent gentlemen from becoming solicitors and even doctors? In which case, good-bye the golden age of simple faith.

Harry Bourke, and those that followed him, knocked the bottom for ever out of the old-time idea of what went to make a snob, for an Earl's son—according to the old reading—obviously could not be a snob; and, in sympathy, the kindred word 'cad' took on a new and rather more charitable meaning. A 'cad,' during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, had been neither more nor less than the superlative of 'snob.' Conduct did not enter



into the question at all—merely station in life. The bank-clerk was a snob and the bricklayer a cad. In neither case was there any suggestion of moral reproach. God had made them snobs and cads and there was an end of it.

Looking back on these now obsolete interpretations, one cannot but be conscious of a certain feeling of vicarious shame for our forbears. Why did they pin such ugly labels on citizens of sterling worth? Nowadays no one but a very small schoolboy—and probably not even he—would speak of a bricklayer as a ‘cad,’ or even think of him in such terms. In our modern irreverence, we are far more apt to label peers cads than bricklayers. In the ‘Sixties, if anyone had described a peer of the realm as a cad, Society, with one accord, would have stopped its ears and screamed, as at some heinous blasphemy. Swooning was out of date but, morally, everyone present would have swooned. The thing, of course, never happened. To have said, ‘Lord X is a cad,’ would have meant, in the language of the day, ‘Lord X is the son of a bricklayer or of a farm-hand,’ which he obviously was not.

Well, all this is long ago and we live to-day in a different world, a world that thinks it knows better. So here we can leave them, past and present, the merry unsophisticated Midvics and the much too much sophisticated Post-Warites staring at one another across the gap of half a century or more and mutually wondering how such oddities ever came into existence. ‘Ah!’ sigh the grey-heads, ‘*si jeunesse savait.*’ But *jeunesse*, of course, never does; it never has and it never will but all the time it thinks it does, which makes things worse; and, when it comes to pointing derisive fingers at the mote in the Midvics’ eye, let *jeunesse* not entirely overlook the beam in its own, or, to use yet another Biblical simile, let it not strain at the moral gnats of other days, when it daily swallows so many immoral camels without the turn of a hair or the flicker of an eyelid.

Let us freely admit that the Midvics had certain affectations which their children’s children have shed and very properly shed; but they were at any rate harmless affectations. If it amused them to talk of ‘tarriers’ and of ‘laloc’ and ‘yallow chaney’ and to call radishes ‘red-dishes’ and cucumbers ‘cowcumbers’ and Lord Home Lord ‘Hume’ and North winds ‘East’ winds (a harmless practice which still survives), why shouldn’t they? In spite of it all, they were lovable, which is the main thing. Are the Post-Warites equally lovable? Perhaps they may be, to one another, in spite of blue lashes and tomato lips. How can a mere Midvic tell?

## QUEEN ELIZABETH.

BY J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

'A LITTLE figure in a great age.' Such was Goldwin Smith's sardonic contrast between Queen Elizabeth and the historical era with which her name is immemorially associated. That the 'times' were 'spacious' is a truth embedded in one of the common-places of quotation. Whether the Tudor Queen can accurately be described as a 'little figure' is the question to be answered here. The article, let me admit, has been suggested by an approaching Quarcentenary. Some people hold that anniversary commemorations have of late been tiresomely overdone. Perhaps; yet it is surely good for the politically minded to be bidden periodically to 'praise famous men and the fathers that begat us'; and who can doubt that among the founders of the British Commonwealth Queen Elizabeth deserves to be 'had in everlasting remembrance'?

If doubters there be, I would commend to their consideration a brilliant study lately published by Mr. Milton Waldman,<sup>1</sup> who supplies a corrective, at once enthusiastic and discriminating, to the snarling philosophy of Mr. Goldwin Smith. Not that Queen Elizabeth has lacked adequate appreciation in the past. Froude's great work will never be superseded, so long as men wish to read at its noblest English narrative prose. Yet superb artist as Froude was, he does scant justice to the character of Elizabeth, and his appreciation of her achievements is inadequate. The hero of his great drama is not Elizabeth, but William Cecil, Lord Burghley, 'Vain as she was of her own sagacity she never modified a course recommended to her by Burghley, without injury both to the realm and to herself. She never chose an opposite course without plunging into embarrassment, from which his skill and Walsingham's were barely able to extricate her. The great results of her reign were the fruits of a policy which were not her own, and which she starved and mutilated when energy and completeness were most needed.' Had this verdict been allowed to stand there would be little reason for any attempt to raise a monument to the memory of Queen Elizabeth. But it has been hotly challenged not only

<sup>1</sup> *Queen Elizabeth* (Longmans, 1933).

by Mr. Waldman, but in two volumes by Mr. Frederick Chamberlin,<sup>1</sup> which are, I fancy, less well known than they deserve to be. Of short biographies there are few better than those of Bishop Creighton and Mr. E. S. Beesley. Perhaps the Positivist philosopher entered more completely and sympathetically into the mind of Queen Elizabeth even than the great historian-ecclesiastic; but he would be a captious critic who could find much to cavil at in either study. But neither Bishop Creighton nor Mr. Beesley could pretend—on this particular period—to suck profundity of original research as Mr. Waldman.

It is, however, with Queen Elizabeth, not with her biographers, nor with the annalists of that great epoch in our country's history, that this paper is concerned.

No English Sovereign has offered such a tempting target to the detractor as Elizabeth Tudor. Captious critics tell us that she was consumed by vanity and insatiate in her appetite for admiration; that her conduct was indecorous to the verge and beyond the verge of scandal; that she lured men to make love to her only to hold them up to scorn or punish them for their temerity; that she treated with base ingratitude her most faithful counsellors and showered favours upon worthless sycophants and audacious admirers. They tell us that her natural and commendable frugality hardened into parsimony and at critical moments endangered the safety of the State. They tell us that she never knew her own mind, and was invariably in two minds; that her hesitations and procrastinations and prevarications were the result not of profound policy, but merely of inconstancy of temper and infirmity of will. How much if any substance such accusations contain is a question which can be determined only by a brief examination of the salient points in a remarkable career.

The Lady Elizabeth was born at Greenwich, on September 7, 1533, the only offspring of the brief, passionate, and tragic union of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. She was not yet three years of age when her mother was sent to the scaffold (May 19, 1536), and was a girl of only fourteen when her father died. She was seventeen years younger than her half-sister Mary, and nine years older than her cousin and rival Mary Stuart.

In the long probationary period—a quarter of a century—before

<sup>1</sup> *The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth* (Lane, 1922); *The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth*, 1923. It may be proper to add that I have in this article drawn to a small extent on *The Tudor Dictatorship*, chapters contributed by me to Vol. II of Hutchinson's *History of the British Nation* (1923).

Elizabeth's accession to the throne two points only demand notice: first the extraordinary loneliness and isolation of the young Princess; and, secondly, her almost uncanny wariness, prudence and tact.

Lonely Elizabeth was, under the circumstances, bound to be. She received some kindness, it would seem, from her father's German wife, Anne of Cleves, and more from his widow, Catherine Parr. But the motherless babe was banished from her father's sight. He never forgave her for not being a boy; as he never forgave her mother for not bearing a son. Her sister Mary was never prone to forgive injuries, and from first to last detested the child of the woman who had turned the King's heart from her mother. So the child grew up in isolation and neglect; so neglected, indeed, was she that Lady Bryan, in whose charge she had been placed, had to appeal to Thomas Cromwell to procure for her some necessary clothes. To the general neglect there was one fortunate and conspicuous exception: Elizabeth was, both as regards body and mind, admirably educated; though in character she was utterly untrained. Inheriting from her father's house a strong will and a keen intellect, she inherited also her mother's shamelessness and coarseness; she was, in short, unmistakably the daughter both of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII, and still more, perhaps, the granddaughter of one of the most astute, cautious, and calculating of our Princes, the founder alike of the Tudor dynasty and of Tudor policy, Bacon's hero, King Henry VII.

Only once, during her long probation, did Elizabeth overstep the limits of prudence. That was soon after her father's death, when she allowed Lord Seymour of Sudeley, Lord High Admiral of England, to make love to her.

Seymour—the younger brother of the Protector Somerset—was a handsome rascal, immensely ambitious, and utterly unprincipled. 'The Admiral,' said Bishop Latimer, 'was a man furthest from the fear of God that ever he heard or knew of in England.' Immediately after the death of Henry VIII he sought to marry the Princess Elizabeth, then a girl of fourteen, but was 'stayed by the Lord Protector and others of the Council.' Failing the Princess, he secretly married her stepmother, Catherine Parr, and abused his opportunities by making love to the stepdaughter, then living under her stepmother's roof. There were water parties by night on the Thames, and much else that was less innocent. Queen Catherine, very properly, sent the girl away; but she herself

died in August, 1548; and there were suspicions that Seymour had 'holpen her to her end.' Be that as it may, he promptly renewed his suit to Elizabeth; but, though not averse to the ingratiating scamp, she was too prudent to allow him to visit her at Hatfield and refused to give him answer until the Council had given their approval. Thus, girl though she was, Elizabeth extricated herself with consummate coolness and skill from a situation which imperilled her honour and even her life. Seymour paid the penalty for his audacity, and other crimes, upon the scaffold. 'This day died a man with much wit and very little judgment.' Such was Elizabeth's comment on Seymour's violent end. None the less, for a young girl who had given her heart to him, if not her hand, Seymour's execution was a terrible experience. But her narrow escape taught her a lesson she was quick to learn: never again must she allow her heart to get the better of her head. Nor did she. Dearly she loved Lord Robert Dudley; but to marry him would have been the act of a political adulteress; she had given her troth to England.

The affair with Seymour was no more than a girlish episode: important only as a revelation of character and in its disciplinary effects. The real difficulties of Elizabeth began with the accession of Mary, to whom she was an object, naturally enough, of suspicion and hatred.

The abortive insurrection of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1554) seemed to give the Queen the chance of ridding herself for ever of a personal encumbrance, and of averting a grave political danger. The rebels confessed that they had meant to marry the Lady Elizabeth to her kinsman, Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon. Courtenay, as a great-grandson of Edward IV, was the representative of the White Rose, and as such had spent fourteen years in the Tower, but he had been released and restored to his honours by Mary. Marriage with him would have strengthened the claims of any Tudor princess and to marry him to the Lady Elizabeth was a direct menace to Queen Mary. The Wyatt rebellion was a fiasco; it resulted only in a huge batch of executions, including those not only of Wyatt himself, but of Lady Jane Grey, her husband and her father. Every effort was made to implicate Elizabeth in the conspiracy; but the practised skill of the best lawyers of the day was impotent against the coolness and self-possession of the young woman of two-and-twenty. She was committed for some months to the Tower, but nothing could be proved against her. Nevertheless, for the rest of

the reign she remained in disgrace and in seclusion. She managed, however, to keep her head on her shoulders—no mean achievement for a man or woman of the blood-royal in Tudor times.

The time of probation was now nearly over; by November, 1558, the tyranny was overpast; the fires of Smithfield smouldered out; Elizabeth was Queen.

Her reign divides into two unequal parts: for the first thirty years the voyage was stormy, her barque was tempest-tost, and but for the amazing skill and prudence of the woman whose hand was continuously on the tiller might again and again have foundered. During the remaining fifteen years the ship sailed in waters that were comparatively calm.

Elizabeth's succession was undisputed, but on every side she was confronted with difficulties and dangers, enough to appal the stoutest heart. 'Never,' says John Richard Green, 'had the fortunes of England sunk to a lower ebb than at the moment when Elizabeth mounted the throne.' 'Never,' wrote Seeley, 'since this country began to play a great part in Europe had its humiliation and its need been greater. Never has a greater interest depended upon the life and character of a single person, than depended from the moment of her accession upon the life and character of Elizabeth.'

These are grave words. Are they justified? Undoubtedly the situation was fraught with uncertainty, perhaps with peril. The acceptance of Elizabeth as Queen of England was in itself a defiance of Papal authority. The Pope had pronounced her illegitimate, and was presently to declare her ex-communicate and to release her subjects from allegiance to a heretic Queen. And the Papacy had, by this time, regained much of the power it had lost in the early days of the Reformation. The Catholic Reaction, as Protestants term it, was at full tide. The Roman Church was putting its house in order, was carrying through a drastic reform of morals and discipline, and reaffirming its doctrines. The most powerful Princes in Europe were champions of the older Faith; no great nation had yet definitively repudiated it.

Moreover, in 1559, France and Spain had at last made Peace at Cateau-Cambrésis. The persistent rivalry of the Houses of Hapsburg and Valois throughout the sixteenth century formed the pivot of European politics. The seal of their reconciliation was the extermination of the Protestant heresy. Would England then be engulfed in the waters of the Counter-Reformation? If



Elizabeth were willing to marry her brother-in-law Philip II, that fate would be her country's ; it would become a mere appanage of the great Hapsburg Empire. Could that fate be in any case averted ? At Elizabeth's accession it seemed unlikely. Spain's friendship could be purchased, but only at the cost of national independence ; the ruling party both in France and Scotland was definitely hostile to the new Queen ; Ireland, as usual, was a ' nest of rebels,' ever ready to find her opportunity in England's danger, and anxious to afford all the resistance in its power to England's enemies.

And England ? Did the domestic situation afford ground for hope that the danger threatening from abroad could be averted ? The treasury was empty, the coinage both depreciated and debased, trade depressed ; worst of all, the pride of the people humiliated by Mary's diplomacy, by the defeat of her army, by the loss of the last remnant of her continental Empire. Sorely had the allegiance of the people been tried by a Queen who was by conviction a persecutor, and at heart a Spaniard. Could the new Queen depend on their fidelity ? Would she prove herself deserving of their devotion ?

The next thirty years were to give a conclusive answer to those questions. Meanwhile, the situation, black as it looked, was not without redeeming features. All the enemies of England, the rivals of Elizabeth, had skeletons in their own cupboards. France had had Huguenots ; Philip II had to face disaffection and presently insurrection in the Netherlands ; in Scotland, Mary Stuart was confronted by the Lords of the Congregation and John Knox. The safety of England would depend not upon her own resources in money or men—the realm was relatively poor and the people numbered 4,000,000, against the 16,000,000 of France and the 12,000,000 of Spain—but upon the tact and skill of its Queen. Could she conciliate opposition at home, and play off, one against the other, her enemies abroad, England might emerge unhurt from the gravest crisis which had ever threatened her.

The first business of the new reign was to settle the ecclesiastical question. Was England to be Catholic or Protestant ? Of late she had, by turns, been both. The time had come for decision. Could a vote of the people have been taken they would probably have plumped for the old Catholic services, and the old Catholic Order, if they could have had them without the Pope. The Church of the people's choice would have been at once Catholic and National. Mary had proved the impossibility of that solution. The Elizabethan

'Settlement,' as embodied in the Acts of Uniformity and Settlement, in the revised Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles, was accordingly a compromise. The new Liturgy was to be as like the old as possible—but in English; the Church was to be ruled by Bishops, but they were to be subject to the Crown; as for doctrine, the people were to have their choice between Geneva and Trent. So long as they went regularly to church they could believe what they pleased. The compromise did not content the out-and-out Roman Catholics, or the zealous Calvinists. Both these parties gave some trouble later on; but for the mass of the people the Elizabethan compromise provided the best attainable solution of a difficult problem.

A source of much more serious trouble was Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots. For nearly twenty years Mary was a thorn, periodically threatening a septic wound, in Elizabeth's side. The dynastic position of Mary—and dynasties counted for much in the Europe of the sixteenth century—was incomparably stronger than Elizabeth's. Her father James V had strengthened the traditional alliance with France by marrying successively two French princesses, Madeleine, daughter of Francis I, and Mary of Guise, who during her daughter's long minority (1542-61) headed one of the two parties which were alternately ascendant at the Scottish court. Mary Stuart was not only Queen of Scotland but by her marriage with Francis II was Dauphiness and for a short time (1559-60) Queen of France. In the eyes of many Englishmen she was also, by right of birth, Queen of England, and by all was regarded as heiress-presumptive to the throne.

Personally, Mary and Elizabeth were not ill-matched. Physically Mary was endowed with a beauty and fascination deeply envied by her cousin; and, destitute though she was of all moral sense, devoid of common decency, a shameless adulteress, an accomplice in a peculiarly brutal murder, Mary Stuart still exercises from her grave over the hearts of myriads of men a fascination which perverts all critical judgment. In intellectual equipment Mary was by little Elizabeth's inferior. Neither was burdened with excessive scruples, and in duplicity and mendacity there was little to choose between them. But in one matter of supreme significance they were worlds asunder. Elizabeth may have been as untruthful and disingenuous as Mary: she may, as Walsingham complained, have 'trusted too much to luck and too little to the Almighty'; she may have pursued devious courses with undeviat-



ing consistency, but all her intrigues and mendacities, all her vacillations and tergiversations were inspired by one supreme purpose, the defence of her people against overwhelming dangers, the safety and independence of the kingdom committed to her charge. Never did any consideration of self divert her political course or inspire for a moment her policy. With Mary, on the contrary, self was predominant. Her people and her kingdom were as dust in the balance as compared with the indulgence of her own passions, the gratification of her own hatreds. In patriotism, in self-control, in all that goes to make up character she was manifestly inferior to Elizabeth, and well was it for both countries that from the long-drawn-out duel Elizabeth emerged victorious.

With the details of that duel there is no space in this paper to deal. The Treaty of Edinburgh between Elizabeth and the Scottish Lords; Mary's reluctant return from France to her northern kingdom; her marriage, so distasteful on every ground to Elizabeth, to Henry Darnley; the murder of Rizzio; the murder of Darnley; the birth of a son and the pathetic moan wrung from the very heart of Elizabeth;<sup>1</sup> Mary's marriage with her husband's murderer, the coarse ruffian Bothwell; her imprisonment at Loch Leven and her escape to England; Elizabeth's genuine embarrassment; the perpetual intrigues of the Catholic Powers and their English sympathisers with the imprisoned Queen—are not all these things written in the Book of the Chronicles? But some few words must be added. That Elizabeth was genuinely reluctant to put her cousin to death there can, for the impartial historian, be no shadow of doubt.<sup>2</sup> 'I swear by the living God that I would give one of my own arms to be cut off so that any means could be found for us both to live in assurance.' So Elizabeth said; and she meant it. To another she said: 'If Elizabeth is to live, Mary must die.' That also was true. No one who examines the evidence as to Mary's complicity in the plots which, one after another, threatened Elizabeth's life, can doubt it.

Those plots—the conspiracy of the northern Earls, the Ridolphi plot, the Throgmorton and the Babington conspiracies—threatened much more than Elizabeth's life; they menaced the safety of the State. If England was to live in security and independence, Mary must die.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Queen of Scots is lighter of a fair son and I am but a barren stock.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Can I put to death the bird that, to escape the pursuit of the hawk, has fled to my feet for protection? Honour and conscience forbid!'

On February 8, 1587, Mary died on the scaffold, thus paying the penalty for many crimes. Her death was of high significance. Catholicism as a creed survived her; political Catholicism in England died with her. Henceforward there could be no ambiguity as to England's allegiance; it was given to Protestantism. Her death relieved England from the nightmare of perpetual conspiracies. Above all, it simplified to an extraordinary degree the political situation; it left Philip of Spain free to strike his long-delayed blow at England. He could now strike without the apprehension that his success would redound to the advantage of his rivals. Never would he have dethroned Elizabeth to crown Mary Stuart in her stead, and give to France the hegemony of Europe.

Not that he had, for years past, lacked provocation. English volunteers had gone in their thousands to the assistance of the Dutch rebels; money meant for the payment of Spanish troops had been intercepted on its way by English privateers and retained in safe custody by the Queen herself; the Elizabethan sea-dogs, the Hawkinses, the Drakes, the Frobishers, the Gilberts, the Grenvilles and the rest, had made the name of English sailors feared in the Spanish main and had brought many rich prizes into English ports. Not even the singeing of the King of Spain's beard had provoked Philip to war on England—so long as Mary lived. Her death left him free to strike.

He struck: the great Armada came; the men of Devon chased it down the Channel; the fire-ships struck terror into the hearts of the Spaniards; the winds blew; the Armada was scattered.

'By God's death I would send my fleet to disperse the Armada even if it were in the interior of Spain.' So spake Elizabeth before the Armada had sailed. Her people's spirit matched her own. The Spanish attack was repelled by a people who in defence of their common country knew no divisions of party or of creed. Consummation statesmanship, pursuing a course consistent in principles, varied in their application to meet emergencies, had through thirty difficult and dangerous years worked that miracle.

The defeat of the Armada has furnished a text for endless commentaries: but one point has been insufficiently emphasised. The year 1588 marked the close of a great political experiment. No one wanted to disturb the closing years of a great reign, or worry overmuch about constitutional conventions. There were, indeed, indications that Parliament was ready at the end of the sixteenth century, as it had not been ready in the fifteenth, to assume the

main responsibility for the government of the State. When Parliament did insist, even in those days, in matters which seemed to them of moment, as in the matter of monopolies, the Queen gave way with a grace which disarmed criticism and evoked gratitude. But Parliament had no mind to worry her declining years. That 'on account of her sex and age which [they] had good cause to tender' they deliberately postponed the assertion of rights and privileges is manifest from the *Apology* drawn up in 1604. Plainly, the days of the Tudor Dictatorship were over; it had accomplished its work; not without detriment to the political development of the nation could it, under the Stuarts, be perpetuated.

Among the great rulers who had contributed to the amazing success of the experiment, the highest place must assuredly be assigned to Queen Elizabeth. That hostile critics can discover in her character and in her policy grave faults, perhaps some weaknesses, may be admitted; but it cannot be denied that she found her country weak, poor, lacerated by internal divisions, and contemned by powerful neighbours; that she left it united, prosperous, proud and strong. And the secret of her success? Swinburne with a poet's insight has penetrated it; 'The saving salt of Elizabeth's character, with all its wellnigh incredible mixture of heroism and egotism, meanness and magnificence, was simply this, that overmuch as she loved herself, she did yet love England better.'

## UP STAGE.

BY R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

AN iron railing with a locked gate surrounds a lonely grave on the lee side of a little church upon a rocky promontory jutting out to sea in a green island in the Firth of Clyde. There is no churchyard where the dead, stretched out in rows, so to speak keep each other company. I like to fancy that in the long nights of winter they are a consolation to each other, as they lie enduring rain, frost, snow, and the fierce north wind's blasts, the answering owls chanting their nightly threnody.

No one knows anything of the solitary dead, except his name—Reginald Montague—cut on the headstone, with the date 1844. A text by some friend, wife, mistress, or mother, to serve perhaps as passport to eternal bliss, or perhaps merely a last pathetic gesture of affection, is cut below the name.

Local tradition has it that the lonely tenant of the plot of ground, in mortmain, who for so many years has lain beneath its well-mown turf, on which reposes, under a glass case, a white marble wreath of roses, was an actor.

No one knows any more of the alleged Thespian.

A bush of fuchsia grows at the corner of the little iron corral that guards the grave, in which the actor lies waiting the call-boy to summon him. Across the whitely gravelled path, where after weekly service the faithful daunder for a few minutes of what in other parishes would be the clash o' the kirkyard, sappier and more refreshing to the soul than all the sermons in the world, there is a wilderness of wiry grass, flecked here and there with tormentil and eyebright, and engaged by harebells. Menacing fronds of bracken threaten to invade and overwhelm the little paradise. Two or three rowan-trees, ragged and stunted by the blast, stand round the ruins of a deserted salt-pan, hard by the church. Ivy has covered the soft red stone, biting into it, as the lianas bite into the bark of some great ceiba in the tropics, giving the mouldering stones an air as of a ruined castle.

The rocks upon the promontory are carpeted with dulse, ware, and sea tangle, whose tendrils float in the tide, coiling and recoiling

like water snakes. Seals haunt the rocks, their round and human-looking heads bobbing up in the water, as they utter a sharp bark before they disappear into the depths.

The nightly owls, the seals, the lonely church, the wind-hacked trees, the moaning of the sea, the harsh cries of seagulls, and the honk-honk of the wild geese as they fly southward in a wedge, on winter nights, set the stage fittingly for the sleeper who no more shall tread the boards. Why he was buried in the unconsecrated ground, outside the church, what made him lay his bones beside a fane whose worshippers, Presbyterians of the strictest sect, who looked most likely on his art with contumely, holding it as a wile of Satan to entrap men's souls, no one remains to tell.

Who raised the well-wrought iron railing round the grave, planted the luxuriant fuchsia, and placed the marble wreath as if they knew, when they had passed away, it would remain to mourn, both for the sleeper and themselves, there is no record of them.

Almost a hundred years have passed since he was laid to rest. Was it a mother who came weeping to the grave, who placed the wreath, emblem of sempiternal sorrow, on it?

Perhaps an actress of the company, mincing along in the full skirt of 1840, lace mittens on her hands; upon her feet low shoes with ribbons curling, like sandals, up her stockings, or as she might have said, a Greek cothurnus; a curtained bonnet on her head tied underneath the chin with a silk ribbon, and carrying in her hand a much-flounced parasol, paid for the everlasting roses from her scant salary. She may have had what were called love passages in those days, with the member of the company who now was 'resting'—a rest that no advertisement in the *Era* will break with news of an engagement. Maybe a comrade who had acted, gambled and drank with him, put up the railing and the headstone, saying, 'Poor Reggie was a damned good fellow, and should not be forgotten like a dog, if he could help it.'

But, then the wreath of roses and the text! Only a woman who had loved him could have thought of such a grave, so quiet, so romantic, and so like the resting-place the man would have desired.

He may himself have chosen his own burial-place; but what the devil brought him to the Isle of Bute?

There could have been no theatre in Rothesay in 1844, or if one had existed it must have been a place where only barnstormers strutted their little hour, and, the performance over, counted their

exiguous gains. It is true that Edmund Kean once owned a villa in the middle of the green Thule, by the borders of a lake. The unknown actor may have been a member of his company. Long Wolf sleeps in the Brompton Cemetery, with his totem sculptured on his headstone, and such another wreath of artificial roses in a cracked glass case upon his grave, placed there by Colonel Cody, ere he too passed to the happy hunting grounds.

Blondin, his tight rope slackened and his balancing pole long ago chopped up for firewood, though once so certain of his equilibrium in mid-air, has found an even firmer footing in a London cemetery.

Reginald Montague, the name sounds somehow as if he had been, as goes the Spanish phrase, 'the son of somebody,' and who-soever paid for the headstone and the grave, and chose the spot, so well selected, with a southern aspect, and the waves always singing throbbing lullabies, must certainly have been a person of no ordinary taste.

After a life of grease paint, make-up, the petty jealousies and feuds of Thespian life, the triumphs, failures, and the constant doubt whether or not a 'ghost would walk' on Saturday; all the discomforts of a strolling actor's life (if indeed he were an actor or a stroller), are done with, and he sleeps in a grave, fitting for any artist, poet, man of letters, or anyone who in his life has been dependent on a fickle public, but now has reached his port.

Let him sleep on, the fuchsia every spring will put on its glad livery of green, and hang its scarlet flesh-like petals over the iron railings where he lies. The wind-seared trees will rustle in the breeze, the wavelets tinkle on the beach, and in the winter out on the rocks the seals will lie and sun themselves upon the dulse. At night the owls will call to one another, with their long quavering Tu-whit, To-who, as if they asked a question that required no answer.

And the stage still waits.



## *THE SONG IN THE HOUSE.*

BY ANN BRIDGE.

WHEN the Buddicombs took Netherfield Greys, that ancient house, and settled down there, they did so with an unspoken sense of usurpation and intrusion that was not wholly warranted by the facts. It was true that Mr. Buddicomb had spent most of his life in the City, like his father before him, adding by respected and steady industry to the already considerable fortune left to him by that parent; always in London, he had never been a squire himself. But his mother had been a Hamilton, a distant cousin of the family who had lived at Netherfield Greys ever since a de Grey built the Manor House in Henry VII's time; and it was the impoverished Hamilton-Greys themselves, stressing the relationship, who first suggested that their rich kinsman might care to buy the house when the discovery of deathwatch beetle in the timbers of the roof made an immediate outlay imperative. Seven thousand pounds, the architect said, must be spent, and spent at once, if the whole richly tinted mass of gables, dormers, chimneys and carved leaden gutters was not to come crashing down, involving the house in its fall. This was the last straw. Up till and through the War, the family had held on somehow, living in fewer and fewer rooms, with smaller and smaller fires, and ever fewer and more incompetent servants. They drank cider instead of wine, and then water instead of cider; with their own hands they dug and weeded in the long borders overlooking the river, while instead of the four or five respectful gardeners of earlier days, an ancient man, an ancient pony and a callow, whistling boy mowed away through the hot summer days, trying to preserve the shaven turf which stretched down in sunshine to the river, and led the feet so softly into the deep shadow of the yew walks. Early and late they worked, in a proud and anxious devotion to that lovely entity, the house, at once the shelter and symbol of themselves as they most realised themselves—a family in a place where they belonged. Townsmen can hardly realise the depth and spontaneity of this feeling: not that a place belongs to you, but that you belong—how profoundly and lovingly!—to it. But the architect's report merely precipitated the inevitable end. Faced

with the alternatives of seeing the beloved house crumble over their heads, or parting with it to those who could preserve its beauty, they chose the latter course, and approached Mr. Buddicombe.

It was characteristic of this gentleman that he refused to buy the house. He never explained fully to anyone the reasons which moved him, not even to his daughter Monica, who enjoyed more of his diffident and difficult confidence than anyone else. He was retiring from business, and inevitably he sought the land. Why is it that, his work over, the Englishman turns for his rest to the quiet fields, the gentle muddy simplicity of his green countryside? He does; and generally, if he can afford it, he buys. But when Netherfield Greys was offered to him Mr. Buddicombe would only take a long lease; he agreed to restore the roof, and to leave the rest much as it was; rather shyly, he suggested taking the house more or less furnished. The disposition of that vast accumulation of period pieces, so at home in the quiet rooms where they had shone for generations, had been a source of much anxiety to the family—they accepted the offer with relief. Then, sighing, they moved out; and the Buddicombs, presently, moved in. To his wife, who had wished to live in a house she owned, Mr. Buddicombe, jingling his keys, said, 'Oh well, my dear —'; to Monica, as they stood gazing from the churchyard gate at the warm pink brickwork of the south front, he observed suddenly: 'Pretty place—pretty place. I'm glad I didn't buy it. You—well, you never know.'

Monica was pretty sure from the outset that she knew what it was that you never know. More even than her father, unable as she guessed him to be to take a step which would part the place irrevocably from its real owners, she felt that she was there on sufferance. She too was in a way glad that the house had not been bought; and yet, if it *had* been their very own, it would, she felt, have done something rather important for her. It would have given a focus to her capacity for devotedness, supplied an anchor for those unexpressed emotions which, in her life, were something of a surplus. The unmarried daughter at home is generally left with a good deal of surplus of one sort or another—sometimes time, frequently interest, nearly always emotion. For ten years now Monica had been filling up her life with things—the flowers, the dogs, calls, notes for her mother, new novels; all the spaces left vacant by her music and her feeling for her father she had diligently filled with occupations extraneous to herself.

It was her own fault, more or less. When she was nineteen, and



prettier than she would ever be again, she had refused Robert. Just then, it didn't seem possible to marry. Her elder sister was newly married and gone, her mother ill; the idea of leaving her father to cope with an invalid and endure the housekeeping of servants was impossible. Or it had seemed so. She hadn't meant it, in her heart, to be a permanent refusal. She had always expected that Robert's regiment, and Robert with it, would return from India some day, and then . . . On empty foggy afternoons, in Lancaster Gate, she used to imagine the heavy door of the drawing-room opening and Bridgeman saying 'Captain Shadforth, miss.' It seemed to fill those afternoons, bring them alive, to imagine that. Especially when her mother recovered, and became again her active and not-too-contented self. But when four years later the regiment came home Robert didn't come to Lancaster Gate; she read in the papers of his engagement, and then of his marriage, to a lovely creature. Monica had never been a lovely creature, and she knew in her heart that no one would come now in Robert's place. He had been her one golden chance—a gift, a bright jewel which life in a moment of caprice held out to her. She had not taken the gift, and that was that.

All the same, she found it impossible not to love the house, even if she had not the right to serve it as those others did, on whom it laid a claim stronger than its beauty and its grace. With something of a sense of stewardship, Monica and her father delighted together in bringing the place back to the perfection which they felt to be its due. With infinite confabulation and care they chose fresh rugs for the great parlour, with its wide open hearth and carved chimney-piece, and appropriate curtains for the many deep-set windows. Five gardeners returned to clip, sweep, trim and shave, while the Buddicombs pored over garden catalogues. All this Monica enjoyed; and bit by bit she discovered, in consultation with the Vicar, quite a number of village good works lying ready to her hand. Any contact with the villagers embarrassed her dreadfully at first—she felt that they must regard her with hatred as an intruder. But if they did, they were very polite about it; and the Vicar, so long as *someone* would deliver his Parish Magazines, lead out his Cubs on a Saturday and provide flowers for the altar in church, did not, apparently, care a hoot *who* did these things.

Most of all Monica liked doing things in and about the church. It lay close to the house, enfolded in the same loop of river—only a low wall of soft rose-red brick separated the churchyard, with its

cypresses and tombstones, from the garden, and by a little private gate she could enter in at any time, unobserved. The church was full of Grey monuments. There was a Crusader earlier than the house; the ruffed builder of it and his wife knelt face to face, with their minute ruffed offspring tailing off behind them, five sons and three daughters; there were later Hamilton-Greys, extravagantly mourned by the flamboyant marble angels of the eighteenth century, and there was the pitifully recent tablet to Guy and Nigel, one killed in 1914 and the other in 1918. But the memorial which most caught Monica's fancy was a small graceful white urn, in low relief on a grey marble tablet, with a simple inscription: 'Sabina Grey. A Deare Daughter'—and then the dates. Sabina died in 1601, aged thirty. Monica, as she emptied the altar vases, rinsed them, and put in fresh flowers, stepping to and fro in the empty echoing church, wondered whether Sabina had sometimes done the same, rustling there in her stiff dress. A deare daughter! Would the Elizabethans have called *her* that, too? Sabina had not married—had she too had a Robert, and put him aside to tend her parents' needs, and then filled empty afternoons for ten years? Monica found the thought soothing—in some curious way it gave her a sense of companionship. Her own second name was Sabina. Sabina had been her grandmother's name, that Hamilton kinswoman who was their one real link with the place. Had Sabina gone to Court, or lived always in the old pink-red house? not so old then, relatively new and modern. She must have been there when the Queen came to stay, the year after the Armada, and slept in the great south bedroom, in the huge four-poster which still had the crowned 'E' carved in the central panel. The frail hangings of that bed, with their clear faded colours, had been in position then—it was all got for the occasion, so the Hamilton-Greys said. Essex had come in the Queen's train, and a crowd of others—was it then that Life had held out to that other Sabina a jewel she did not take? Because everyone married in those days, Monica thought, sighing a little.

While Monica and her father devoted themselves to the house and garden, Mrs. Buddicombed turned her attention to the neighbourhood. Called upon, she returned the calls promptly and imposingly. Such hospitality as she received she returned in double measure, giving lunches for teas, and dinners, as far as possible, for lunches. Mrs. Buddicombed had a great belief in what she called 'bringing people together'—she delighted in a throng, she liked to see her staircase a mass of people, struggling to get up. But she was rather

clever with her entertaining ; she would not attempt a throng without a lure. To her annoyance the house was not ready (owing to Monica and Mr. Buddicombe's intolerable fussiness over fabrics) for either a strawberry party or a raspberry party—that summer was wasted. It was autumn before her first large entertainment took place.

Actually she owed the lure for this particular gathering to one of those musical friends of Monica's of whom she so much disapproved, because they had no style and were, as she said, 'no use.' This young man was of less use than anyone imaginable, being barely twenty-four, shabby and extremely poor. But like so many of the very young nowadays, he knew an immense amount about his subject—it was really intolerable, Mrs. Buddicombe thought, how learned the very young now were. When Monica had mentioned his name in Lord Dreadmouth's hearing—a thing Mrs. Buddicombe would never have done—the old gentleman spoke of him positively with reverence, as *the* authority in his own line. His line was harpsichords ; and on one of his visits he had pounced upon an ancient harpsichord which stood in one of the little-used rooms along the great upper corridor, crying out that it was an early—something, Mrs. Buddicombe couldn't remember the tiresome name—a treasure and a wonder. But when he went on to say that Olivia Pettigrew ought to, indeed simply must, come and sing contemporary Elizabethan songs to it, in costume, accompanying herself as she alone could, Mrs. Buddicombe at once saw possibilities in the idea. A rare harpsichord in the great parlour, a rare singer in Elizabethan dress, in that marvellous contemporary setting—here was just the lure she required for her first party at Netherfield Greys. With unusual cordiality she enquired of the young man how one could get hold of Miss Pettigrew, whereupon he said carelessly that he could bring her ; when she further enquired if he knew what her fee was, he thought, even more carelessly, that it was thirty guineas. The sum seemed reassuringly large to Mrs. Buddicombe, for one afternoon ; and with the help of the styleless young man the matter was put in train.

Monica accepted the party with her usual resignation. She wanted to hear Olivia Pettigrew sing with the harpsichord, but this singing in costume, to a crowd of people, seemed to her bound to combine the maximum of tiresomeness with the minimum of pleasure. Nevertheless, she and the young man arranged the harpsichord down by the great fire-place, and ransacked the house

till they found the appropriate seat, a low-backed thing, contemporary, with faint traces of gilding, to place in front of the old instrument.

When Miss Pettigrew actually arrived Monica had something of a shock. She was a smallish, smart, bouncing woman, very much made up, with a slight but unmistakable Cockney accent. Monica led her to the small boudoir which had been turned into an improvised green-room, where the singer unpacked her clothes, talking volubly all the time. She complained sharply of the bad light at the toilet-table, and asked for innumerable things, including a glass of port, till Monica was reduced to feeling it an absolute profanation that such a person should sing in the house at all. When at last she left her and slid quietly into the great parlour, it was already full of the solid befurred and silken shapes of the neighbourhood in its best winter clothes. During the pause which ensued, while the audience chattered and rustled their programmes, she sat wishing it was all over. And then the door opened, and the young man ushered Olivia Pettigrew to the harpsichord.

Monica almost gasped—and a little breathing sound of wonder and pleasure passed through the room. A golden figure in Elizabethan dress—jewelled cap, puffed looped sleeves, wide lace collar and square-toed shoes—stood for a moment outlined against the dark panelling before moving with slow stateliness to the instrument. In that marvellous dress Miss Pettigrew had gained height and dignity—Monica was swiftly aware that her appearance was no longer a profanation, but exquisitely in harmony with the great room. She sat with bent head, in an attitude of composed grace, while the young man spoke, introducing her; as he finished, she began to play. Her beautiful hands—Monica had noticed their beauty in the boudoir—moved over the keys, making them send out their faint, rather touching tinkling in a small accompaniment; and then she sang.

Before the first verse came to an end Monica realised that the party was justified. The voice was lovely, a true mezzo-soprano, with just that touch of burr in the lower register, and boyishness in the upper, that was perfectly suited to the curious masculinity of sixteenth-century English music. But even more, as the song proceeded, she felt herself to be in the presence of a real artist. The 'attack' was perfect—with exquisite rightness the singer just emphasised the curious difficult beat of the words against the accompaniment, and yet allowed the emotion of the song to breathe

through, lightly, lightly—like a little flutter of heart-beats through the graceful artificiality of some formal minuet. And she brought out, too, as she proceeded through the first group, the peculiar quality of Elizabethan songs—the sense of youth, of a generation young as no generation ever was before or since, held in a formal convention; of ardours and ecstasies under the stiff and stately dress of some prodigious masquerade. A singer herself, Monica knew how desperately difficult it is, for this very reason, to sing those songs as they should be sung—and her sense of this quality about them had increased of late. Curious about the Elizabethan Sabina, she had gone to the contemporary song-writers—Campion, Dowland and the rest—for illumination, and had found herself hearing their words with quite a new sense of what lay behind them, the background and the life. And here was Olivia Pettigrew, the irritable person with a Cockney accent, pouring out their songs in an interpretation so right and true and sure that it seemed suddenly to Monica as if the room itself sang. Yes, it was that—the fancy having once slipped into her head, stuck there; it was as if the great room was somehow repeating its own past, in the notes of that golden figure before the ancient instrument. Had Sabina sat and listened, as she now did, to some renowned singer of her day?

How silly she was, she said to herself. Lost in her fancies, she had practically missed the end of the first group. Now, after an interval, in which she felt sure Olivia was drinking more port, the songs began again. But the moment they did, she had once more that curious sense of the past opening before her, of the room giving up something which it held. Really absurd! Oh, but she must listen to this—she loved this! She knew the opening accompaniment—it was from Campion's *Third Book of Ayres*; and glancing at her programme she read the words again, which she so loved for their curious haunted quality, the half-bitter invocation of magic summoned to the aid of the deserted heart:

'Thrice tesse these oaken ashes in the air  
Thrice sit thou mute, in this enchanted chair  
Then thrice three times tye up this true love's knot  
And murmur soft, "She will, or she will not."

Go burn these poisonous weeds in yon blue fire  
This screech-owl's feathers and this prickling briar  
This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave  
That all thy cares and fears an end may have.



Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round !  
 Melt her hard heart with your melodious sound.  
 In vain are all the charms I can devise  
 She hath an art to break them with her eyes.'

Now Olivia was singing it—oh, but faultlessly ! The passion, the suspense, the sort of horror of the amateur magician rose in the room as her voice filled it—Monica shut her eyes. But at the close of the first verse she opened them again with a start. The singer had altered the words—she sang '*He* will, or he will not.' Now why had she done that ? She listened again, with closer attention—she might have been mistaken. No—definite and clear, in the final verse, the voice sang :

'Melt *his* hard heart with your melodious sound.'

And then, with the slower cadence of melancholy :

'In vain are all the charms I can devise  
 He hath an art to break them with his eyes.'

The last words were sung quite low, the very breathing of reminiscent joy and present sadness—precisely, oh precisely so had she herself felt when Robert's face, Robert's eyes, had become a lost sweetness, edged with an intolerable regret. Her own memories invaded her, evoked by the music. But gradually her curiosity revived. Why should Miss Pettigrew have changed the words of that song ? With a curious urgency Monica felt that she must find out, and when the music was over, and the company was moving—as slowly and congestedly as even Mrs. Buddicombe could have wished—down the broad staircase towards tea, she went into the boudoir. The singer was three-parts changed—her costume and music lay scattered about ; she was touching up her eyes and lips before the dim mirror. Monica praised the singing, warmly and sincerely—Miss Pettigrew thawed at her evident knowledge and appreciation. Then she praised the rendering of that particular song, and at last : 'But why,' she said, touching the verses on the programme, 'did you change the words ?' 'What do you mean, change the words ? I never do such a thing,' said Miss Pettigrew, whipping round briskly from the toilet-table. 'Here—let me see.'

Monica held out the paper. 'Here—and here. You sang "*He* hath an art to break them with *his* eyes"—and all of it, as if it was a woman singing.'

Miss Pettigrew, scanning the page, said : 'Sorry to contradict,



but really, I did no such thing. You can't have heard properly. I sang the words as they are written there. Really, Miss Buddicom—' Monica, soothing her rising wrath, leading her down to tea, talking civilly to her mother's guests, carried about within her an exciting puzzle, which she would examine later. She was quite sure she had *not* been mistaken—she had heard distinctly the words Miss Pettigrew sang; she was equally convinced that the singer, in spite of her temper, was honestly not aware of having deviated from the text. Then what? Then what? Turning it over in her mind afterwards, she remembered her strange fancy during the recital—that the room itself was, in the music, uttering some secret of its own past. It was fantastic, but in spite of its absurdity she was left with a curious feeling that something had happened.

They left the harpsichord in the great parlour after the party. Mrs. Buddicom liked to tell people about it, and Monica was learning to play on it. They left the curious gilt chair, too, though Monica actually used a music-stool when she was practising. She was sitting there one day, a week or so after the recital, working at the accompaniment of the song of *Campion's* and humming the words softly as she played. It was a gusty afternoon, and presently a great puff of wind came down the chimney, blowing out a cloud of smoke and scattering fine ashes into the room from the open hearth. Coughing a little, Monica played on. But when another and another puff came she got up and went over to the hearth, and with the tongs re-arranged the great oak logs which were smouldering there, to see if that would improve matters. As she stood up again, a little dizzy from stooping, she saw a woman sitting in the gilded chair, between the harpsichord and the window. The first thing Monica noticed was the face. It was a girl's face, staring with a most strange tenseness of expression, half-longing and half-horrified—indeed the whole figure had a curious strained rigidity about it, as of a person waiting for something; and now she saw that the girl was dressed in some dark red stuff, full below and slender above, so that the body sprang like a flower-stalk from the spreading skirts. On the narrow bosom a jewel gleamed—Monica saw it clearly against the dark dress; a circle of moonstones, with a heart-shaped moonstone drop below it. The circle enclosed a faint tracery of some sort, like a monogram, but what she could not see.

Too astonished for fear, Monica stood by the hearth, staring. As her senses came back to her she was aware of two feelings—an

intense curiosity, which told her that she must notice and remember *everything*, and a great compassion for the strained longing in the girl's face. What was she waiting for, sitting so still in that chair ?

Another puff of wind came down the chimney ; it caught Monica full as she stood on the hearth, smothering her with ashes, choking her with the sharp smoke. She sneezed violently. Wiping her stinging eyes, she looked again towards the chair. The figure had gone.

Monica sat down on the music-stool, and gazing at the empty chair tried to collect herself. She *must* remember—everything ! But she found she could not remember much. The red dress, the jewel, the slenderness ; the face—dark-haired, only rather pretty. But when she recalled the face, though she thought she remembered a cap of some sort, she could really only see the half-horrified longing of the expression. So strange, this ; even more than wondering who the girl was, she wondered why she looked like that. Presently she closed the harpsichord and put away her music ; folding the sheets together, she hummed absently the words of the song she had been singing when the fire puffed out. And suddenly, with the sharp clear impact of a knock on a door, the thought struck her—had *she*, the girl in the red dress, been using some such invocation ? Sat there so still, waiting for the evocation of some image, some reality even ?

Monica presently became very firm with herself. She did not doubt what she had seen, but she determined not to let her fancies run away with her, but to be sternly scientific. Of course she wanted the girl with the jewel to be Sabina, but just for that reason she must be on the watch with herself. She thought of hunting up the family history—the Vicar was an antiquarian, and knew all about the place. But some instinct restrained her. The proper way was to wait and see more, if possible, first.

She waited nearly a month—long enough for the impression to have lost its first clearness, so that she almost began to doubt its reality. One afternoon she was down at the church, doing the flowers for All Saints next day. The old sexton was at work, making a huge bonfire outside the churchyard wall ; he had been trimming the brambles which sprawled over it, and clearing up the debris of a cypress bough which had come down in a gale the week before. He chattered to Monica, taking the dead flowers from her to add to his fire—a general clear-up he was having, he said, afore All Saints.

'Tis then the dead should have their garden tidy,' he said, with an aged grin, and Monica marvelled at the way the Shakespearean tradition lingers in the English countryside. Down in that corner the deadly nightshade grew something terrible, he told her, but he had grubbed 'en all out to-day—and he showed her with pride an owl's nest that he had pulled out of the belfry, a vast untidy agglomeration of rubbish, full of feathers, which now awaited its turn on the bonfire. Monica was sorry for the owls; she loved their desolate voices on still nights, and the wheezy breathing sound they made when they sat in the belfry. Her task finished, she bade old Jenkins good afternoon, and started back to the house, her basket on her arm.

She decided to go round through the yew walks, to enjoy the last splendour of the chrysanthemums, and to see if she could find a late blossom or two in the rose-garden. She turned into the broad walk, where the turf spread right up to the walls of yew—the smoke from Jenkins' bonfire was drifting across the garden, and she knew that he must have put on the owl's nest, for she could smell the salt, acrid odour of burning feathers. Suddenly, to her surprise, she saw a woman come into the walk from under the arch which led to the sundial garden, and move towards her with a rapid masculine stride. It was a stranger—Monica had never seen that long pale face before, and never before had she seen a woman so angry. She was clenching her white hands as she walked, and her thin lips moved—her eyes were terrifying. Half-frightened, Monica stepped aside as the woman strode past—she almost expected a blow from those clenched fists, on which she noticed a blaze of rings. Then, wondering who it could be, she turned to look after her. Was the hair really that strange chestnut red? But though she could see the woman striding away, she could not see the hair—an odd erection of lace rising from the shoulders, like a screen, eclipsed the head; and now, no longer concentrated on that furious face, she noticed the stiff rich skirts, square at the hips, and the narrow bodice, before the figure turned out of the walk and disappeared.

When it had gone, Monica walked slowly forward. Most strange! It was not the girl in the red dress, though obviously someone of the same period. In fact, Elizabethan! And with the word a conjecture almost too wild to be believed darted into her mind. No—impossible! And that was surely a living woman, a living anger! Half-puzzled, she turned through another arch into the walk where the chrysanthemums were. The smoke was thicker

here, making a blue haze among the brilliant reds and bronzes of the flowers which stood in groups in front of the dark yew hedges, leaving only a strip of turf between. But there was something else among the flowers, too. Slowly, to and fro, moving up and down the borders as though they also were a path, were innumerable people, men and women, all dressed in clothes like those Olivia Pettigrew had worn at the party—as various, as brilliant as the flowers they so incredibly ignored. And suddenly that one circumstance brought Monica to a realisation of what she was seeing. For them, the borders were not there—they trod a turf coeval with themselves which stretched from hedge to hedge; for them, the chrysanthemums were only phantasms of the future, as insubstantial as the phantasms of the past. Only for her was the curtain of space and time incredibly rolled up, so that past and present were visible together.

Suddenly she could not bear it—suddenly it was frightening. She felt that she could not endure this smiling, unconscious bejewelled company among the flowers. Forgetting her determination to be scientific, Monica ran. Her scissors dropped from her basket—she never heeded them. She turned through the farther arch into the sundial garden and came to a dead stop. For there, standing in one of the rose-beds, among the late blooms she had meant to pick, was the girl in the red dress, a young man with her. Oh, and life was holding out a jewel to her! The thought came involuntarily. For the young man had an arm about the girl's shoulders, protectingly—and though there were tears on her face, she was looking up into his with that security and rapture about which there is no mistake. A rush of sympathy took away Monica's fear. Now with a white hand he was stroking her head, like a child's—oh, but she had no right to see, to spy on them! Softly, as if her step on the soft turf could have disturbed them, she tiptoed to the next opening in the square of clipped hedge. From it she looked back, just to be sure she was not mistaken. There among the roses which for them did not exist the pair stood, and now, in spite of a protesting movement of her hand, the young man slipped something over the girl's head, with a reassuring gesture. Monica saw the gleam of moonstones on her breast, before he enfolded her in an embrace. She turned quickly away, and crossed the open lawn. She looked back, when she reached the house, at the dark shapes of the yew hedges, with a sort of awe for what they concealed. The smoke from the churchyard bonfire was still drifting over and through them, bluer

as the late afternoon light deepened—sniffing, she could still smell burning feathers. She went slowly into the house.

It was a day or two before Monica recovered sufficiently from the strangeness of this experience to begin to take stock of it. A whole gardenful of ghosts *was* rather overwhelming, she told herself, determined again now to be scientific. She had been rather ashamed when she went the next morning to recover her flower-scissors and found them, rust-stained with dew, on the walk between the chrysanthemums. By daylight, she went and studied the print of a famous contemporary portrait of Queen Elizabeth which hung in the dining-room. Oh well, those old prints told you very little—certainly the dress was the same, with that immense lace collar high as the top of the head; and the long face with thin lips was not unlike the angry face of the woman she had met in the grass walk. Next time she was in London she went to the National Portrait Gallery, and studied the picture there. Well, that *was* very like, certainly. Thinking it over, she was pretty sure about Elizabeth. But mostly Monica's curiosity centred on the identity of the girl in the red dress. Now she tackled the Vicar, on the grounds that it was time she knew more about the history of the place. He gave her books, told her what he knew from one source and another, and showed her his notes on the family. The de Grey of Elizabeth's time had two sons, one of whom succeeded him, and one daughter—that Sabina whose urn was in the church. The son who succeeded had only married in 1594—five years after the date of Elizabeth's visit: the other son died, unmarried, on the Spanish Main.

Still, Monica felt, she was not much further on. There was no certainty that the girl in the red dress was Sabina; she might have been the eldest son's wife, come in Elizabeth's train. And yet she had a curious instinct that it *was* Sabina. This gave a certain personal, almost tender interest to her researches. She felt that she *knew*, from sympathy, from instinct, more about Sabina than books and records could tell. And more and more, as time went on, and autumn deepened into winter, she became convinced that the red girl was not a mere visitor to the house, but had been there a long time. She was there so much, still! One day when Monica came in from a ride her father was out on the lawn, with his spud, and she rode her horse right across the broad gravel sweep to speak to him, so that from where they stood she could see the south front of the house. Some chance made her look up, and there, leaning from a window, was the girl, craning out expectantly; one hand held the



stone mullion, so that the looped red sleeve was clear against the grey stone. Monica said nothing to her father; but afterwards, by counting the windows, she identified the room—a small spare-room, never used because it had no fireplace. And presently she found that the sound of horses' hoofs would almost always bring the girl to that window. One day in January hounds met at Netherfield Greys—greatly to Mrs. Buddicombe's joy; but Monica slipped round to the south front to glance up, and there, sure enough, she was. Poor child, poor child! Oh yes, she had been there a long time—filling empty afternoons, running to the window at the sound of a horse's hoofs, waiting for someone who never came; using, Monica felt secretly convinced, some piteous incantation like that in the song, to bring him back.

At last Monica decided, so little did her enquiries yield, to apply to the Hamilton-Greys for information. She wrote asking to be allowed to see them, was bidden to lunch, and went. It was a pleasant flat in London—old Mrs. Hamilton-Grey and a widowed daughter entertained her. Monica, in a renewal of her embarrassment, spoke about indifferent matters till lunch was done—then, over coffee, she broached the subject. Had they, she asked rather timidly, ever *seen* anything in the grass walks, in the great parlour? The old lady laughed out. 'Ghosts, do you mean? My dear Miss Buddicombe, someone is hoaxing you. Our great sorrow at Netherfield was always that it had no ghost! So incomplete, for a house of that age.'

'Then who,' said Monica nervously, 'is the girl in the red dress?'

They had no idea. They asked her to describe her, politely, but a little derisively, Monica felt. She had meant to tell them of the song, of the angry woman in the broad walk, and the jewelled company among the chrysanthemums; but now, feeling snubbed, she merely described the girl and her dress, rather minutely—'and she wears an odd jewel—a circle of moonstones, with a heart-shaped drop below it, and something in the middle.'

She saw their faces change, startlingly, at that. The old lady got up and went to a small glass case, unlocked it and took something out. Then she put into Monica's hands the very jewel she had seen on the breast of the girl in red. Monica looked eagerly at the cipher. An 'R' and an 'E' were intertwined within the circle of moonstones. The very same! Eagerly she begged them to tell her whose it was, and its history.

In a very different manner, now, they told her. It was always



called the Queen's Jewel, and was supposed to have been a gift either from Essex to Elizabeth or Elizabeth to Essex—'you know his name was Robert.' But, oddly enough, they never had known exactly how it came into the family. 'Of course they stayed at Netherfield, some time before his marriage, which made her so angry when she found it out—and it has always been supposed that then or later, she gave this to some member of the family.' Was it known, Monica asked, if Sabina was at home then? Oh yes, Sabina had been at home—the Queen gave her a pair of gloves the day she arrived, and here they were, also in the glass case. And the daughter-in-law—was she there then? Oh no, they were clear about that—she was a Wiltshire girl, and Guy de Grey only met her when he went to stay at Wilton, a few months before his marriage.

Now, in their turn, they questioned her—with interest, almost with respect. Monica felt herself under a sort of obligation to tell them what she had seen, and did so—after all, they were their ghosts! They listened, thoughtfully. 'Of course, that would explain Guy's losing his place at Court that year,' said the widow, 'if there was some trouble over Essex.' 'Exactly,' said the old lady. Monica was amused at their tone—as of those who discuss current family affairs. When she left, the old lady bade her good-bye with a certain warmth—'You have added a footnote to our history, my dear,' she said.

On her way home Monica decided that this was something she must share with her father. He might think her fanciful, but she must risk that—the Queen's Jewel was good evidence, and he loved the house so much, it would certainly interest him. There were people at dinner that night, but next day she spoke to him. They were sitting together in the great parlour, between lunch and tea—it was a dark rainy February afternoon. Monica found herself curiously at a loss how to begin. At last: 'Father, I've seen a ghost here,' she blurted out.

'D'you mean that poor girl in red?' said Mr. Buddicombe, tapping out his pipe on the logs of the hearth. 'I often see her. Is that what you went to see the Greys about?'

Wonderful Dad! How much he saw, how little he said! Now, contentedly, they compared notes. He had never seen Sabina—they called her Sabina, fearlessly, after a time—except in the parlour and at the window; but in those places he had seen her frequently. 'Poor thing, she doesn't give a rap for motors,' said Mr. Buddicombe. 'I've been to see, several times.' He heard Monica's story, and such

confirmation as the Greys had been able to give, with the deepest interest; she even ventured to tell him about the song, and the ingredients of Jenkins' bonfire. Happily, they pieced it all out together. At length: 'Well, people would say it was fanciful, but then ghosts are fanciful things!' said Mr. Buddicom whimsically. 'It's funny, though, that *they* never saw anything.' Monica knew that 'they' meant the Hamilton-Greys. 'In a way, you know, it makes one feel—oh well——' Monica also knew what it made one feel—she felt it herself. They were not intruders any more; to them, the old house had yielded a secret withheld from its real owners. Sitting there, in the dusk and firelight, they felt at last very much at home.

But at the last her father gave Monica perhaps the greatest surprise of her life. 'It's *all* funny, you know,' Mr. Buddicom said, ruminatively. 'Robert, too.' He paused. 'Kiss me, my dear—you're a great comfort to me.' Trembling all over, Monica rose and kissed her father. He put his arm round her. 'You're my dear daughter,' said Mr. Buddicom.

W. S. GILBERT.

BY DAME MADGE KENDAL.<sup>1</sup>

'I love you, Philamir: be satisfied.'

—*The Palace of Truth.*

WHEN I joined the Haymarket, Mr. Buckstone was already an old man and, in addition, was very deaf, yet he never missed a cue, for he taught himself to know what the actors were saying by reading their lips. The fact that he and the leading members of the company were not so young as they had been was vividly brought home to him by my brother Tom who, at his request, adapted for him a French play to which he gave the name '*Progress*.' My brother had already submitted his play, *Society*, to Mr. Buckstone, and it had been rather contemptuously turned down as I have previously recorded.

When my brother read *Progress* to Mr. Buckstone, he exclaimed, 'Good Lord, they're all old people in it.'

'Certainly,' replied my brother, 'I've written the piece for your company.'

Buckstone himself was a distinguished author at the time and a prolific one, judging by the number of titles appended to his name. Many of his original plays, however, were written by the simple expedient of translating them from the French. There was no international copyright law in those days and many English writers availed themselves of the plays of French authors for translation into English. Tom Taylor, for instance, translated or adapted from a French original, *The Ticket of Leave Man*, in which Henry Neville made so overwhelming a success that he acted the part of Bob Brierly some thousands of times. Gilbert himself derived from a French original, *Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*, his play, *The Wedding March*, while Mr. Buckstone, having read a French play by Madame de Genlis entitled, *Le Palais de la Vérité*, gave it to Gilbert to turn into an English play. He did it under the literally translated title, *The Palace of Truth*. It was the first

<sup>1</sup> A chapter from the life of Dame Madge Kendal by Herself, to be published this autumn.

of his plays in which my husband and I acted. The play was written in blank verse, a form in which Gilbert was an adept and he employed it again and again in his early work. It was not a pronounced success, but it was helped to the favour of the public by Mr. S. Theyre Snuth's *Uncle's Will* with it. It was really my brother Tom who started Gilbert as a dramatist by introducing him to Mr. John Hollingshead, who wanted someone to adapt a French play for him.

The remuneration authors received in those days may be judged from an incident which happened to Gilbert. He read a play to Buckstone. Buckstone liked it and asked him what his terms were for it.

'It has taken me three weeks to write it,' said Gilbert. 'Ten guineas a week would be a fair price to pay me. So shall we say thirty guineas.'

Without any demur Mr. Buckstone accepted the terms and then said, 'I'm a much older man than you, Mr. Gilbert. Will you let me give you a little advice?'

'Certainly,' replied Gilbert.

'Well,' returned Mr. Buckstone. 'Never sell so good a play for thirty guineas.'

'I won't,' said Gilbert. And he never did.

Years later, when, in 1883 Miss Mary Anderson revived *Pygmalion and Galatea*, at the Lyceum, all London crowded the theatre to see her, Gilbert's royalties amounted, it is said, to about £200 a week.

But this is anticipating my remembrances of Gilbert considerably, so let me go back to the *Palace of Truth*.

One peculiarity about Gilbert was that he never liked good-looking men. When we were going to produce *The Wicked World*, Mr. Buckstone sent for me and told me that my husband was not suited for the part for which he had been cast and in that play it was an appalling part.

'Well, Mr. Buckstone,' I replied, 'I do not play any part opposite to anyone but my husband, so I am discharged.'

'Don't talk nonsense,' exclaimed Mr. Buckstone and he turned away.

How he settled it with Gilbert I never knew and I never asked, but my husband played the part.

One of the other characters was acted by Mr. A. R. Arnott, who made his first appearance in the play in company with my

husband. One night, to my amazement, when the cue came, I looked up to find Gilbert on the stage with my husband, and not the regular actor. When the curtain fell, I was told Mr. Arnott and another gentleman had been playing at boxing and his opponent had made Mr. Arnott's face rather terrible to look upon, so he could not be seen in public. For the nonce I turn myself into a dramatic critic and say that Gilbert, clever man, brilliant genius that he was, was the worst actor I have ever known or seen. I am not saying this behind his back now that he is not here to defend himself against that charge, for I told him so to his face that evening. Whatever other qualities I may lack, I never lacked courage. My dear father always inculcated into me that a woman should have something of the courage of a man and a man should have something of the tenderness of a woman. In the words of Albert Chevalier which I heard years after—when it came to acting, one can say of Gilbert, 'E don't know where 'e are.' Had I known those words at the time I should certainly have sung them to him.

When I first played Galatea, I used to stand for the statue, in exactly the same way as, later, Miss Mary Anderson did. Later on, however, a real statue was substituted. That distinguished sculptor, Mr. T. C. Brock, R.A., modelled the head and face from sittings I gave him and also adapted the pose from the one I took up and into which I fell whenever the action of the play did not compel me to change it. In this way, I was able to convey that Galatea's newly acquired muscles fell into the same contractions as those Pygmalion had sculptured in marble. As I have often been asked to revive some memories of this part, let me say that the first movement I made to suggest the inflowing of life into her body was with my eyelids. I used to open them twice very slowly, and then flutter them. Then fixing them on Pygmalion, as more life seemed to take possession of my body, I moved my hands and arms towards him.

When Mrs. Charles Kean came to see the play, that sweet woman and distinguished actress told me that, in her opinion, the fluttering of my eyelids was most effective, and, following her advice, at the end of the play when Galatea returns to marble, it was my last action while I uttered the words, 'Farewell, Pygmalion, farewell,' the last farewell being long drawn out and my voice fading away into silence.

Mr. John Ruskin liked the play very much and came often to see it. On the first night Miss Caroline Hill, who was a very,

very pretty woman and played Cynisca admirably, made an enormous success, her curse on Pygmalion when she calls down the wrath of Venus on him for what she believes is his faithlessness with Galatea being delivered with great poignancy and force.

When the curtain fell Gilbert came on to the stage, beaming with delight and said, 'My play is a great success.'

I was standing by him and answered, 'It's not over yet, Mr. Gilbert. There's another act to be played.'

'Oh, but the gist of the play is over,' he replied.

Such remarks are the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune which one has to encounter.

The one thing, however, which lives more vividly in my mind, for I shall never forget it, was that, at the end of the play, I received the greatest ovation, if I dare use such a word, that I ever had in my life.

Observation outside the theatre has always been, in my opinion, an essential part of every actor's education. As Galatea I introduced an effect which had always fascinated me from the time I was old enough to be observant, viz. the expression of a baby the first time it looks into a mirror. This look of wonder and surprise mingled with something of fright at not knowing what the vision means had been brought home to me by my own baby, and I determined to introduce it in the scene when Galatea sees her face reflected in a mirror. At the first glimpse of myself I almost dropped the mirror, so frightened was I. Then curiosity got the better of my fear; I took a second glance and my fright gave place to a smile of pleasure.

Gilbert paid me what I have always regarded as a great compliment when my husband and I wanted to play the piece during our summer tour while the Haymarket Theatre was closed. The compliment was contained in the following letter:

8, Essex Villas,  
Kensington,  
4th January, 1872.

DEAR MRS. KENDAL,—

With respect to the country right of *Pygmalion* for the towns that Mr. Buckstone does not propose to visit this year, I suggest the following terms:

100 guineas for the country rights of the piece in  
the United Kingdom until the end of your summer



tour, say until the end of July 1872 except as regards the towns that Mr. Buckstone has already secured.

Of course, you should be at liberty to under-let the piece at your own terms while the copyright remains with you.

I shall be glad if you will let me have an early answer as I want to reply to the enclosed application.

I may add that my terms to Mr. English's client will be two hundred guineas. But I am fully sensible to the disadvantage the piece would labour under if the part were played by any other actress than yourself.

Believe me to be, dear Mrs. Kendal,

Faithfully yours,

W. S. GILBERT.

Years later when we had been to America and certain of the newspapers had declared I was too old to undertake any further conquests, Dion Boucicault, who was then living in New York and was devoting himself to teaching the art of acting in which he was a past master, wrote a letter to my husband from which I extract the following paragraph :

'103, West 55th Street,  
'New York.

'MY DEAR KENDAL,—

'If you return to New York and to Palmer's Theatre, do take into consideration producing *Galatea*. I have good reason for this. The play has *never* been given here. Mary Anderson, Mrs. Langtry have gone through it, but I have seen Madge in it and so again tell you unreservedly it has never been played and her performance is a revelation.'

After the play had run through the season in London, Mr. Buckstone took it on tour. On the first night we played it in Dublin, the first act went very quietly until just towards the close, when a woman in the pit shouted as *Galatea* advanced affectionately to *Pygmalion*, 'Whist, darlin', don't kiss him; his wife's just gone out.' It is unnecessary for me to add that her interruption was greeted with vociferous laughter by the quick-witted audience.

It left me in floods of tears, to be consoled by my husband, who thought I could never play the second act after the play had been turned into ridicule. Happily, however, the crowd recovered itself and took the rest of the sentiment in the proper spirit.

During that week, the Orange Riots took place. One night while my husband and I were playing that famous one-act play,

*Uncle's Will*, some of the men began quarrelling and fighting in various parts of the house. It would have ruined everything unless we could stop them. On the spur of the moment I went to the piano, struck a loud chord which arrested their attention for the moment and before they could resume their interruptions I began to sing the 'Vale of Avoca,' one of the best known of their own beloved Tom Moore's songs. There was an instant hush over the house and for the rest of the evening everything went well. Such is the temperament of a highly strung excitable people.

We left Dublin to act in Belfast and there, again, the Orange Riots broke out. Mr. Buckstone was a very nervous man and fearing what might happen in the evening when the house would be crammed to suffocation, he said on the Saturday, 'We shall go home after the matinée.' He refused absolutely to alter his determination and we left by the afternoon boat. I stood on the deck, not at midnight, but in the blazing afternoon sun with my little daughter Margaret in my arms. She waved her baby hand at the soldiers and rather liked the noise.

It was in 1874 that Gilbert broke away from the blank verse of his fairy plays and wrote *Charity*, in which, although I had a part for which I was far too young, one of the chief London critics was good enough to state that at the end of the third act I achieved a 'triumph more stupendous and overwhelming than has ever been accorded an artist. The audience literally rose to greet her.'

The fact that I was too young for the part handicapped me favourably in the audience's estimation, as it always does when a woman has to dress and appear on the stage much older than she really is. It has this added advantage that the part gains in charm. My experience on the stage is contradicted by the life of to-day for the older a woman is, the younger she tries to dress.

The scene of the last act was a drawing-room and in designing it, Gilbert, who was as particular in the arrangement and furnishing of his scenes as in the acting of his characters, insisted that round the frieze of the room there should be a decoration of blue and white china plates, so the property man furnished plates of papier maché, beautifully painted, which looked exactly like the real thing.

One night, early in the run, one of the plates fell on to the stage. Instead of breaking, as china would have done, it fell on its edge and proceeded, wheel-like, to roll down the stage and eventually fell into the pit which in those days occupied the whole floor of the house, for there were no stalls.

As might be expected the audience roared with laughter. The scene was a highly emotional one between Mr. Chippendale and me. He had to say, 'Faith, Hope and Charity,' and I had to reply, 'And the greatest of these is Charity.'

The laughter of the audience affected us on the stage. Mr. Chippendale tried to maintain a serious face, but failed and burst out laughing too. There is nothing more contagious than laughter at a contretemps on the stage. Catching the disorder from him, I began to laugh. We laughed so much that the curtain had to be lowered without my speaking the tag.

It was unfortunate that Gilbert had come that very night to see how the play was getting on. As soon as the curtain fell, he came on to the stage and abused me roundly for ruining the scene. His tirade must have lasted quite ten minutes and, as my gravity had already been upset, he did not produce the effect he desired.

'It's unfortunate,' I said, 'that you were in front to-night. If you want to see the effect of the scene come next week when I shall have recovered from the effects of to-night.'

Gilbert's irritation did not last long and was superseded by his characteristic appreciation, for when, later, I expressed the desire to produce the play in Nottingham and wrote asking his terms, I received the following letter from him:

30th January, 1874.

DEAR MRS. KENDAL,—

You are at liberty to play *Charity* at Nottingham on Ash Wednesday.

I should not think of taking a fee from you. Whatever success the piece will eventually achieve will be mainly due to you and I hope I may some day have the opportunity of proving that I think so.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT.

The last of Gilbert's poetical plays in which my husband and I acted, if I except his *Sweethearts*, which Queen Victoria commanded at Osborne, was *Broken Hearts*.

The curious who care to peer behind the veil will find a simple expression printed at the end of the play which indicates what its composition cost its author and the estimate he placed on the work.

'Finished, Monday 15th November, 1875, at 12.40 a.m.'

'THANK GOD.'

It was produced less than four weeks later, on Thursday, December 9, of that year.

Mr. Hare did not act in it, but engaged Mr. G. W. Anson to play the only other man's part than that acted by my husband in it. Mr. Hare contented himself with directing the production and he managed the 'water works' of the little fountain which plays a prominent part in the production.

It was a recalcitrant fountain. The water was supposed to pour forth when I began to sing a song, the words of which I accompanied with a lute.

'Far from sin, far from sorrow  
Let me stay, let me stay.  
From the fear of to-morrow  
Far away, far away.'

Whether, like some people I have known on the stage, it was jealous of sharing the audience's approbation with another actor or what the cause was I could not say. I only know that as soon as I began to sing the fountain invariably stopped flowing.

One day, during a rehearsal of this play Mr. Hare and Gilbert had a slight controversy. Perhaps 'slight' is the wrong adjective, for the upshot of it was that the rehearsal was dismissed. They both left the theatre locked in their 'Sunday tempers.' At that time, beneath the Court Theatre there was a little railway station with a platform about six feet wide and a little train used to puff in and puff out of it. Up and down the narrow platform Gilbert and Hare tramped, each with a settled frown upon his brow and each ignoring the other as they passed, almost brushing shoulders. The only notice they took of each other was to sniff as 'they passed by.' At length the little train puffed in. Both of them made for the same door which a passenger had opened in order to alight. Naturally, as the door was too narrow to admit them both at the same time, neither could get in. Suddenly, Gilbert's strong sense of humour came to the rescue of the absurd situation. He burst out laughing.

Hare looked at him, and in his turn, burst out laughing. Each took a step back from the train and at the same time each held out his hand to the other. They shook hands warmly and together they returned to the theatre. As they were coming in at the stage door, I arrived in the hall, on the point of going out. 'We've come back to rehearsal,' they both exclaimed at the same time.

'Oh, have you?' I said, quite complacently. 'I think everybody's gone. You've been some time making up your minds and at the present moment I'm going home.'

I left them both gazing in astonishment at me. What disgusting women we leading ladies are! But, oh, how necessary it is to be like that sometimes.

Hare and W. S. Gilbert, to the wonder and amazement of my early married life, were both in the habit of losing their tempers every minute and recovering them in a half a minute. I used to call them 'The Rapids,' after I had been to America and seen the real thing at Niagara.

When Gilbert did not like anybody he could be very rude to him. He not only could be, but he was.

Very often while we were at the Haymarket, my husband and I said we would not act in any more of his plays and I don't think we did, until we went to the Court Theatre with Mr. Hare. So rude was he that I have been told on very excellent authority that men constantly did not speak to him. He himself was aware of his peculiar proclivity, for, on one occasion, invited to a stag dinner, he exclaimed in astonishment on entering the room, 'A dozen men and I'm on terms with them all!'

During the run of *All For Her*, which drew London in consequence of Mr. John Clayton's success, Mr. Hare had a birthday and gave a party at Skindle's Hotel, Maidenhead. Among the guests was Mr.—(Sir. Both these titles, they do get in one's way)—W. S. Gilbert, for he and Lady Gilbert had been great friends of Mr. Hare. Clayton had been out of the bill for a night or two through indisposition, and while he was absent Gilbert had gone to the theatre.

'I'm sorry I was absent the night you came to see the play,' said Clayton.

'Were you?' replied Gilbert. 'I didn't miss you.'

In spite of Gilbert's quickness of temper, he had one quality in addition to his genius, which exalted him in my eyes. This quality was his generosity. This is a vivid example of it. One morning I went to rehearsal, bent on begging for one of the poor members of our cloth who had fallen on evil days. Something went wrong and Gilbert flew into one of his most towering rages. When he was quite calm again I went to him and told him what I wanted. Like most other men at that time, he carried his gold sovereigns in one of his trouser pockets and his loose silver in the other. With-

out a word, he put his two hands into his pockets and drew out a handful of silver and a handful of gold.

'Take what you want,' was all he said, holding out both hands to me.

'I shall,' I said, 'and you will have to pay for your temper this morning. I think I like this hand of yours with the gold in it better than the other. I'll take what I want from this side.'

Before I had finished speaking he had recovered his sense of humour and he was more than generous to my poor friend.

In addition to his appearance in *The Palace of Truth*, Gilbert also acted the two men's parts in *Broken Hearts* on different occasions. The first time was at a special matinée in which Mrs. Bernard Beere acted Lady Hilda, the part I originally played, and Miss Marion Terry played the Lady Vavir which had been 'created,' as they say in France, by Miss Hollingshead.

On this occasion, it was again an accident which compelled him to take up the part at short notice. The late Mr. Kyrle Bellew, that very handsome and talented actor, was cast for the part of Prince Florian. At that time he was acting in the evening in a melodrama in which, during one scene, he was on a raft in a raging sea during a storm. The evening before the matinée something went wrong with the stage machinery; he was hurled off the raft on to the stage and his chin was cut to the bone. It left a scar which he carried to the grave. There was no understudy, so Mr. Gilbert went on and spoke the lines. Anyone who was at that performance will substantiate my statement with regard to his acting.

Later, at a special performance, he played Moustá, the deformed dwarf, a part demanding considerable tragic intensity. I did not see it. I only heard of it. Strange as it may seem, the words faded from his memory as the following incident will show.

Soon after Miss Julia Neilson first went on the stage—what a beautiful girl she was!—she was engaged by Mr. F. H. Macklin, in partnership with Gilbert, for a short tour in which she played among other pieces, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, *Sweethearts* and *Broken Hearts*, the last two forming one bill.

The actor engaged for the leading character parts found himself unable to be perfect in the lines of Moustá for the first performance of *Broken Hearts*, in Manchester, and asked Mr. Gilbert to play the part, as he had already done so. He acquiesced readily enough,



for the public's lack of appreciation of *Broken Hearts* weighed heavily upon him and he was anxious to give it another chance of recognition.

Unhappily, at the rehearsal on the morning of the day of the performance he found he could not recover the words. In their dilemma, Mr. Macklin recalled that a young actor friend of his had recently made a success in London by reciting the whole play. They telegraphed to him and asked if he could play the part that evening. He caught, with less than a minute to spare, the only train which would take him to Manchester in time for the performance. So anxious was Mr. Gilbert that he was waiting at the station when the train came in. Even so, the order of the two plays had to be reversed so as to give the actor time to dress and make-up, Mr. Gilbert himself helping the actor, who spoke every word of the part without missing a syllable and gained the warm encomium of the author.

Although I have criticised Gilbert adversely as an actor, I must, in equal justice, take off my hat—I should say my bonnet—to him as a stage manager, that functionary who is now called the 'producer' but whom I often call the *reducer*. Gilbert knew exactly what he wanted his actors to do and could tell them and even show them how to do it. That, of course, requires the possession of qualities quite different from those of the actor.

My friend, William Shakespeare, upon whom I fall back on every conceivable occasion to help me out with his words, for his genius always describes our thoughts, realised this quality when he made Portia say, 'If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.'

This same quality was also recognised by the authors of that now classical French play, *Adrienne Le Couvreur*, who was taught by the prompter of the Theatre Français, Michonnet. He was evidently a very poor actor and the authors made one of her admirers say, 'How comes it, M. Michonnet, that you who are so great a teacher can be——'

'So bad an actor,' replied the old man, finishing the sentence with a pathetic smile.

It's very easy, say I.

After our association with the Gilbert plays came to an end, there was a period of something like fifteen to twenty years during which I do not think we ever spoke to him or even saw him.

One day, as I was driving to the Junior Carlton Club, for it was my custom to call there for my husband to bring him home to dinner, a four-wheeled cab was standing in front of the building, so that the coachman could not drive close to the pavement. I noticed that the cabman and a porter of the club were struggling to get the occupant of the cab out of it.

I jumped out of the victoria and said to the cabman, 'Give me the gentleman's sticks and his hat and you and the porter will then be able to get him out.'

They did and they took him up the few steps leading to the door, with me following with his hat and sticks. They placed him on a chair in the hall and I stood by waiting until he had recovered his breath after the exertion to which he had been subjected.

On looking into his face, I, of course, recognised at once who it was.

'Gilbert,' I exclaimed.

'You!' he replied in astonishment.

'Yes, why not!' I answered.

At that moment my husband came out of the billiard-room and home we drove.

Probably a year elapsed, when our mutual friend Mrs. Seymour Trower, who had taken a new house in Bryanston Square, invited my husband and me to a house-warming party which she said was to be made up of old friends.

We had scarcely entered the drawing-room when the butler announced, 'Sir Schwenck and Lady Gilbert.'

Directly he saw me, Gilbert came over to where I was standing and with a great deal of good humour lighting up his face said, 'I *am* glad to see you. I have never thanked you for having helped me up the steps of the Junior Carlton that afternoon.'

He sat down and from his conversation and his manner he might have been my long-lost brother. He said all sorts of nice things which it would never do for me to repeat. When dinner was announced, I went down with Sir Douglas Straight. Immediately opposite to me sat Gilbert, who never addressed either of the ladies between whom he sat, but spoke across the table to me, to the utter astonishment of many of the other guests, who knew we had not spoken for years.

After dinner, when the men came up to the drawing-room, he came and sat by my side and told me what a pleasure it was to talk to me about our past and his plays in which I had acted.

He was his own most agreeable, amusing and friendly self, much to my amazement.

As I have written, my husband was in the habit of going to the Junior Carlton Club every afternoon to play his game of billiards and he returned with me at a quarter to seven for dinner. The next day, something prevented me calling at the Club, but the instant after I had heard my husband's stick in the stand in the hall I heard him cry, 'Madge, come down; I've something to tell you.' When I went downstairs into his room, he said he had not sat down to the lunch-table three minutes before Gilbert came into the room and going up to him said, 'Kendal, can I lunch at your table?'

'You have been a member of this club for twenty years,' said my husband, 'and can lunch at any table you like. I believe that is one of the rules of the Club.'

'Gilbert,' continued my husband, 'sat down and talked of everything—of you and your brother Tom who introduced him to John Hare!

'He was witty; he was full of spirits; he ate an enormous lunch, he flattered you and he flattered me—which astonished me so much that I could not eat mine.

'After lunch, he sat and talked for a time, then he looked at his watch and said, "I must be off, as I have an appointment to teach a young lady to swim." He went away but came back and shook hands with me twice, in the most cordial manner.

'Now, Madge, what do you think of that?'

'I can quite understand it; he's twenty years older than he was when he quarrelled with us. He knows he was wrong; he has learnt his experience and profited by it.'

He was a complex, curious character, but once people have looked inside the Pandora's box which we all have been given, they become changed. So it was with him, and I repeated how glad I was that he had sought out my husband to make friends with him. Imagine my despair on the following morning when, on coming down to breakfast, as I always did before my husband, the first line I saw on opening the daily papers was the announcement of Gilbert's death. I gathered all the papers together and put them into a drawer. My husband, coming down to breakfast, naturally missed his favourite morning paper and I was called to tell him I had put them away. Then I had to break the terrible news to him, for I knew how great a shock it would be.

About three weeks later, I went into my husband's study and found an enormous fire burning in the grate and him sitting at his writing-table surrounded with letters.

'What on earth are you doing?' I asked.

'I am burning all Gilbert's acrimonious letters,' he replied. 'I can only remember his last day with me, and I'm so glad of it.'

About a year later, a gentleman named Grey wrote and said he was writing Gilbert's life and asked if my husband would send him any letters he or I had received from Gilbert.

We replied, 'We have nothing to send you.'

I think—I am sure—that the only letters of his I possess are those to which I have referred previously.

There is no doubt that we can apply the word genius to W. S. Gilbert, and with reason. His versatility was marvellous and through it all he struck the note of making the fairies human to their waists. That characteristic comes out in every one of his fairy plays—even in *Pygmalion*, that play of his which stultified life, while in *Iolanthe* he carried this idea out more strongly than anywhere else.

He loved the theatre. He was happy in it. Rehearsals were the breath of his nostrils. He was full of ideas, some of them impossible—utterly impossible—but he *was* a genius. And, please remember, genius is not a word which comes readily from my lips or my pen. In all my long life and among the large number of men and women I have known, there are not altogether more than two or three to whom I would or could apply that word.

To Gilbert's memory I repeat his own words which Zeolide in *The Palace of Truth* says in a calm and friendly tone, 'I love you, Philamir: be satisfied.'

## COCOBALL.

'NICHOLAS and MAPHEO, and COCOBALL, Ambassador to the great CANE . . . rode with their company thirtie days iourney, and at the end of them, the saide COCOBALL fell sick and dyed, and the two breethren followed on theyr iourney.'

*The Travels of Marco Polo (Frampton's translation).*

THEY set their faces to the desert wide.  
A golden tablet for a sign they bore,  
And letters to the Pope; and at their side  
Went Cocoball, the Khan's ambassador.

Thirty days' journey out of Cambalu  
This last fell sick and yielded up his breath;  
And they rode on. . . .

No more the writer knew  
Of Cocoball, or of his lonely death;

Whether he yearned to see their fabled land,  
And thought, as eyes grew dim and body chilled  
At death's approach, of all his lord had planned,  
And wept to think his mission unfulfilled;

Or whether, silent, his calm musings ran  
On no regrets, but on such things as these:  
Great Cambalu, the city of the Khan,  
And a green garden set with mulberry-trees

Where his young daughter lay beside a stream,  
Drawing slim fingers through the chiming wave  
And wondering how he fared, yet could not dream  
Of his swift sickness or his wayside grave;

Or whether memory failed with body's strength  
And he lay smiling as at dawn he died,  
Content to smell the dew and see at length  
The rose-crowned morning walk the mountain-side.

JAMES FERGUSSON.

## WATCHING THE STOAT AT WORK.

BY A. S. FRANK.

'A lithe brown form on the woodland path,  
A keen nose searching for scent on the trail,  
Then hot on the line he hastens from view,  
A diminutive demon with blacktipped tail.'

SCARCELY anyone, I suppose, having an intimate knowledge of the habits of that little freebooter the stoat, will deny that he is a bad character. Bloodthirsty, cruel, destructive and merciless are a few of the adjectives often used in describing him. Excepting the fox, he is probably the most mischievous animal the British game preserver has to deal with nowadays.

Yet in spite of all this the stoat is an interesting little creature. As one of the very few carnivores still commonly met with in our country-side his habits and hunting methods are of great interest. For his small size, too, he is full of pluck, for I have, myself, been threatened with attack by a female stoat in defence of her young.

To anyone who spends much time out of doors where stoats are numerous there come from time to time opportunities of watching the stoat hunting. The rabbit is his staple food, so it is in pursuit of a rabbit that one most often sees him.

The hunted rabbit is usually the first to attract attention. He may run across a woodland footpath in front of one, or perhaps he may be seen crossing a field. Something about him at once attracts the experienced observer. He does not go particularly fast—there is no suggestion of the dash which he shows when pursued by a dog—but lopes along at a steady pace, and he appears preoccupied.

Unless badly frightened, a rabbit never moves from place to place without first making sure the ground ahead holds no lurking enemy ready to pounce on him. Both cat and fox are adept at this game and the rabbit who would survive must know how to circumvent them. Hence his movements are usually deliberate and careful. When hunted by a stoat, however, this care is thrown aside, and he pushes ahead almost regardless of danger.

In this way he sometimes passes close to a human being. I have seen it asserted that this is done to obtain human protection, but much more probably the rabbit is so obsessed by fear of the stoat, that the other danger is overlooked.

If the observer should take his stand behind some slight cover,



the stoat will soon be seen following. He hunts almost entirely by sense of smell, and his actions depend upon the vagaries of scent. As the foxhunter knows, scent is extremely variable from day to day. It depends on the nature of the ground, the moistness of the atmosphere, the weather, wind and some other factors as yet very imperfectly understood.

On some days hounds, working on what hunting people refer to as a 'burning scent,' can follow the line at a brisk gallop, their heads held breast high, a strong scent appearing to hang in the air well above the ground. So, I have occasionally seen a stoat hunting, moving along with quick, undulating bounds, head held well up to catch the rabbit taint carried in the air. Much more frequently he travels quite slowly with nose to the ground, carefully following the scent left by the feet of the rabbit.

On such occasions he will often pause, questing for a moment to make sure of the ground; when in doubt he will go back for some yards and puzzle out the line slowly and methodically, exactly as a foxhound does under similar circumstances. If at fault he makes short casts to right and left until he hits off the line again.

The unfortunate rabbit appears to know that he has very little chance of escaping and sometimes seems to make a very half-hearted effort to save himself. A kind of hopeless apathy possesses him. Probably he is demoralised by the knowledge that his burrow, which is a safe refuge when pursued by man, dog or fox, and for which he makes at top speed in any such emergency, is no refuge at all when he is being hunted by a stoat. Should he enter it the stoat will follow and either kill him underground, or hunt him out again.

It appears to be the stoat's deadly persistence which wears the rabbit down. Sooner or later the latter loses heart, squats down and appears deliberately to cease making an effort to escape. The stoat comes up and sinks its teeth deeply into the nape of the rabbit's neck, immediately behind the skull, the rabbit meanwhile squealing loudly. Every stoat appears to know instinctively that this is the most effective point to attack. At any rate the bite never appears to be applied anywhere but in this one place. The wound causes injury to an important nerve centre, resulting in helpless paralysis, though not instant death. The stoat then sucks the warm blood of its victim through the wound.

After this orgy the stoat usually leaves the kill. Possibly he retires to sleep. Later he returns and feeds upon the flesh. A full-grown rabbit will provide him with several meals, but rarely does he

return often enough to finish it, probably because he has meanwhile killed some other victim.

One of my earliest experiences of stoats occurred one day in early summer. Walking across a grass field with my dog at my heel I approached a hedge growing on the top of an earth bank. As I drew near, a screaming, chattering noise arose. A stoat jumped out of the grass-grown ditch, and ran for a few yards in the field. Then, as the dog gave chase, it crossed the ditch, bounded up the bank and through the hedge into the next field with the dog in hot pursuit.

Peering through the hedge to see which direction they had taken, I became conscious of a low confused noise coming from the ditch near where the stoat had first appeared. On investigation I found another stoat with several young ones, one of which was disappearing into a small hole in the bank. On my approach the stoat faced round and threatened me, thus holding me off while first one and then another young stoat entered the hole. Having no weapon of any kind in my hand, I stood and watched.

The last young one having disappeared from sight, the stoat, first uttering further threats, entered the hole herself. This hole proved to be the entrance to a mole run which followed the course of the earth bank. I could still hear the stoat 'chattering' from the interior, but the sound became fainter as the family receded farther and farther along the mole run.

In April some two or three years later I was walking across a rough grass field dotted over with gorse bushes when I heard again the sound made by an angry stoat. It came from beyond a clump of gorse. Approaching quietly and looking over I saw three stoats. One was standing about twenty yards away, and intently watching the other two who were fighting furiously.

When first seen the two combatants were grappling and rolling on the ground. In a few moments they sprang up and commenced to run side by side with the curious undulating motion which a stoat has when moving quickly. As they ran they slashed at one another with their teeth so rapidly that the eye could scarcely follow the motions. Their screaming was incessant. Suddenly one succeeded in securing a hold with his teeth. The other instantly rolled over and with frantic use of teeth and claws tried to make him release his hold, the two meanwhile rolling on the ground as when I first saw them.

Almost at once they were on their feet again, running in another direction, biting and squealing as before. Again, after running fifteen or twenty yards they ended by grappling and fighting on the ground.

Presently one broke away and the running fight was resumed, this time towards me. Just beyond the bush from behind which I was watching the scene they again came to grips, rolling on the ground in a biting, scratching, squirming heap in such active motion that the eye could scarcely follow the individual movements. From my first hearing them the screaming had never ceased, but it reached its highest pitch each time they came to grips on the ground.

Being young and having a stick in my hand I dashed round the bush hoping to take them at a disadvantage. They were too quick for me, however. Evading my blow they ran in different directions for the nearest cover. I have always regretted my hasty action on this occasion. Had I restrained my impulse I might quietly have watched the fight to the end. What I saw of it, however, left a lasting impression of the almost demoniacal fury and ferocity of these little creatures and of their extraordinary quickness and activity.

Though this was nearly thirty years ago I have never again had an opportunity of watching two stoats fighting. When discussing the subject with keepers and others who see a good deal of their habits, I have related this experience; but so far I have met no one else who has witnessed such an incident. This suggests that such fights are of rare occurrence.

Another stoat episode of special interest I watched from the top of a steep slope ending in a high vertical cliff, with the sea at its base. Approaching the top of this slope I paused to take in the view. Thirty yards away and on a lower level was a heap of large stones such as are used in that district for building walls. These had been collected together and then apparently forgotten. They were piled roughly in the form of a low irregular pyramid.

Almost at once my attention was attracted by the movement of a small reddish brown object near the base of this stone heap. A glance told me it was a stoat which was nosing about as if trying to trace something. Once it went on to the stones, its sensitive nose actively searching this way and that as though in quest of something. Not satisfied it returned to the grass at the base of the stone heap.

Still trying to solve the reason for the stoat's movements I looked about and there on the topmost stone of the pile, crouching down with head drawn in and ears laid flat on its neck was a rabbit, motionless. Its bulging eyes were gazing fixedly behind it to where the stoat was hunting about in an attempt to follow the scent of its footprints.

I at once understood that I was watching a clever move on the part of a hunted rabbit to put the stoat off its tracks. It is well known that rough dry stones do not carry scent well. The rabbit seemed sure that, provided he remained perfectly still, his enemy was not likely to see him, though he was perched up on the top of the pile in full view. I myself, though fairly quick-sighted, had quite overlooked him for some moments. A stoat, relying as it does chiefly on its powers of scent, uses its eyes much less than its nose. From observations I have made from time to time I have formed the opinion that the stoat's powers of vision are not so good as those of a man. Of course, any movement on the part of the rabbit would have attracted its attention at once. But an attempt at hiding on the part of any animal or bird, however highly camouflaged by protective coloration, depends absolutely upon its remaining motionless.

After failing to trace the scent across the stone pile the stoat slowly and systematically worked round the base of it, apparently trying to pick up the line of the rabbit where it had left the stones—on the assumption that it had gone right across them. In this manner it worked about two-thirds of the way round the heap from the spot where I had first seen it.

There it reached a point where it was down-wind from the crouching rabbit. The slight breeze carried the body scent of the rabbit directly to it. The stoat responded instantly. Lifting its head to sniff the air, he swung round head to wind and now full of animation began to cross the stones, following the scent up-wind.

The rabbit sat until the stoat was five feet away. Then with a flying leap it fled. Three or four bounds carried it clear of the stones, when it ran down the slope to some flat ground near the cliff-edge. Swinging to the right it kept on for a hundred yards to wheresome water from a ditch, or drain, spread out fanwise across the flat before falling over the cliff. Across this wet ground the rabbit went and into a patch of rushes beyond, where it was lost to view.

The stoat followed more slowly. Once clear of the stone heap it picked up the scent, and with nose to ground followed this methodically down the slope. At the spot where the rabbit had crossed the damp place it was instantly at fault. It made a cast to the right, and again to the left. Then crossing the wet ground it made one cast there. This, however, being made in the wrong direction was unsuccessful. Returning across the wet ground it hunted about for a few moments quite at a loss. Not succeeding in hitting off the line taken by the rabbit it abandoned the hunt, returned along the

hillside and disappeared from sight amongst some gorse bushes. The simple way in which it had been baulked by its quarry crossing a film of water ten or twelve yards broad was surprising. This did not at all agree with one's ideas of the persistence of the stoat in pursuit of its prey.

One summer's day while sitting quietly on the bank of a river I became interested in the doings of several water-voles which were moving about on the opposite bank and swimming in the water. In order to observe the movements of these little animals better I climbed out into the branches of a large willow-tree overhanging the water. The day was very hot and I was quite content to sit lazily watching the comings and goings of the voles.

The river is deep and sluggish at this point. Thirty yards above it makes a sharp right-angle turn. Presently, from round this bend a vole came running along the far bank. Plunging into the water it swam across. Almost immediately a stoat came into view evidently following the vole. When it arrived at the place where the vole had crossed, the stoat also took to the water.

Meanwhile the vole had landed beneath my tree and had entered a hole in the bank. The stoat came ashore also, found the scent of the vole and followed it into the hole. Almost at once the vole bolted from another entrance and took to the water, again followed by the stoat, now not far behind. I then saw that the stoat could swim appreciable faster than the vole, in fact it appeared to swim about four yards while the vole was swimming three.

This was a complete surprise to me. I think it is generally assumed that the stoat will only take to water when compelled by danger, or for some other urgent reason. Yet this one had not only taken to the water quite voluntarily, but was actually beating the water-vole—an animal which spends half its life in water and is perfectly at home in that element.

By the time the vole was two-thirds of the way across the stoat was dangerously close behind. Now, however, the vole (a past-master of aquatic tactics) played its trump card. It dived and doubled back under water to the bank it had just left. Looking down from my elevation in the tree I could follow its movements beneath the surface.

As was to be expected, this manoeuvre completely outwitted its pursuer. The stoat swam round the place where the vole had disappeared apparently expecting to see it come up again. Disappointed in this it swam to the far bank where it presently dis-



appeared amongst the grass of the meadow beyond, no doubt to search for some easier quarry. Stoats do catch voles, probably in their burrows, or when they can take them by surprise at some little distance from the river, but there seems little hope of making a capture once the vole has taken to water.

I have since watched a stoat swim a rapid, though not very broad river, when I could see no urgent reason to cause him to do so. He was quite undisturbed, and came down through a wood, selected what he thought to be the best crossing place and swam in without hesitation.

Stoats are fond of eggs and take those of pheasant and partridge from the nest. They will also take fowl's eggs from nests in the neighbourhood of farms. The young of any ground-nesting birds are taken by them. On one occasion, attracted by the outcry made by a pair of robins, I saw a stoat standing by the nest containing young while the parents fluttered three feet above it uttering loud cries of distress. On my appearance the stoat made off.

On another occasion my attention was attracted in a similar way to a thrush's nest in a tall thorn hedge by the outcry made by the parent birds. This hedge was very dense. The nest was seven or eight feet from the ground and a stoat had climbed up from branch to branch. In this case too I arrived in time to save the young birds as, on seeing me, the stoat hastily descended and fled. It seems probable that in cases where the disappearance of young birds from a nest is attributed to cats a stoat may sometimes be the culprit.

The female stoat is not particular in her choice of a nursery for her young. She may give birth to her family—six, seven, or eight young ones—in a rabbit burrow, a decayed tree-stump, amongst a pile of rocks or in a loosely built dry-stone wall. For food she brings them young rabbits, rats, mice and the young of almost any species of bird. If not interfered with, there they remain until practically full grown.

Then, usually about the end of June, they leave the place which has so far been their home and begin to hunt, remaining together in a family party for some weeks. During this time one can see plain evidence of the damage which they do to game. The track of such a party is littered here and there with the remains of their victims. The wings and legs of young pheasant, partridge, black-bird, thrush, and other species of birds and the remains of rabbits indicate all too clearly what they have been living upon.

One day in June some few years ago I encountered a neighbouring keeper carrying his gun and half a dozen traps. He informed me



that he had that morning located a 'breed' of stoats in a dry-stone wall close at hand. He intended to trap as many as possible before they moved elsewhere. At his suggestion I accompanied him to the place. As we approached the wall where the stoats had made their home Dickson, the keeper, stopped and listened. 'I hear some stoats down that hedgeside,' said he; 'I wonder if they are moving!' Dropping his traps, he slipped a couple of cartridges into his gun and followed the sound. Curious to see what would happen I followed him, though keeping discreetly twenty yards behind.

The stoats had been following a ditch overgrown with bramble and other foliage. As we went down the sloping field we saw them leave this and pass through a hedge into a large wood below, but too far away for an effective shot. Hastily negotiating this hedge Dickson soon got in touch with them. The undergrowth in this wood was dense and only here and there could the stoats be seen. Several times I saw him lift his gun to his shoulder only to lower it again. He told me later that each time he could have shot one or two. At the shot, however, the remainder would have scattered and he would not have got another chance. As they still appeared to be unaware of his presence, he reserved his shot, hoping for a better opportunity.

Through the centre of the wood runs a keeper's footpath. The stoats continued downhill until they came to this. Here they turned at right angles and followed the footpath. This gave Dickson his chance. Getting several in line he fired twice. I joined him at once. Three stoats lay dead where the first shot had struck them. Another had been killed by the second shot. While examining them a movement amongst the ferns on one side of the path attracted our attention and another stoat, wounded by one of the shots, was discovered and dispatched. Dickson said that the female and one young one had escaped. He had seen seven in all. The five dead all proved to be young ones, though practically full grown. Most men would have been satisfied with this large measure of success, but not so Dickson! He told me he thought the female would probably go straight back to the place where her family had been reared.

With this probability in view he hastily made a detour to try to arrive there before her. I followed much more leisurely. Presently the sound of a shot came from above. On reaching the place I found Dickson had succeeded in securing the mother of the family. Waiting behind the wall, he had only been in hiding a few minutes

when he heard the alarm cry of a blackbird from the edge of the wood—usually an indication that cat, stoat, or fox is on the move. Shortly afterwards he shot the stoat as she came from the ditch in which the party had been when he first heard them. The circumventing of this female was a curious instance of the intuition which some keepers have regarding the movements of vermin.

At noon one day, after a strenuous morning's fishing I sat by the side of a pool eating some sandwiches. The river at this point passes through a wood. I sat on the grass at the edge of a perpendicular drop of six feet, my legs hanging over the water below. By my side was a young spaniel, his eyes hopefully watching every movement of the sandwich I was eating. Behind me an ill-defined and little-used angler's footpath followed the windings of the stream.

Without warning, the dog suddenly sprang up and gave chase to a rabbit which, unnoticed by me, had passed along the path close behind my back. I shouted to recall the dog and he returned after going about forty yards.

I suspected from the behaviour of the rabbit that it was being pursued by a stoat. I judged, however, that if such was the case my shouts to the dog must have scared the stoat and made him relinquish the chase. For some minutes I remained on the alert but saw no sign of the pursuer. I had resumed my seat and my thoughts had been concentrated on matters piscatorial for some little time when once more the dog sprang to his feet and dashed at a stoat which had come along the path to within three yards of us.

Quite unaware of our presence until the dog sprang up, the latter was completely taken by surprise. With an angry scream it jumped aside to avoid the rush of the dog, landing on the verge of the bank on which I sat. The dog, turning swiftly, was on it with open mouth. Without a pause it jumped over the edge.

I looked down expecting to see it in the water. Instead, it had landed on a thin projecting tree-root three feet down. From there it jumped to an almost invisible foothold eighteen inches beneath my dangling feet. Thence it jumped and caught at some bramble runners which hung over the edge three or four yards beyond where I sat. Up these it clambered and made off along the path in the direction taken by the rabbit.

The whole incident was over in a moment. I had no time even to jump to my feet. Completely taken at a disadvantage, as it obviously was, the quickness of decision and activity displayed by the stoat in avoiding the danger were characteristic.

A pronounced trait in the character of the stoat is its curiosity. This applies equally to its smaller cousin the weasel. In character and habit these two species are almost identical. If a stoat observes one when some little distance away it will make for the nearest rabbit hole, or a stone wall, or other place of safety. If the observer shows no sign of having seen it, and stands quietly forty yards away, the stoat will often reappear, sit upright with its forelegs in the air and watch him intently. A great many stoats must have been shot by gamekeepers and others who know of this habit and take advantage of it. I have more than once seen a stoat standing up peering at me in this way in a field of long grass, his yellowish white waistcoat showing up very conspicuously amongst the green of his surroundings.

Once while riding a motor-cycle along a country lane the engine stopped abruptly owing to a small mechanical breakage. I had to spend half an hour in replacing the broken part before I could proceed. I had been at work about five minutes when looking up, I saw a stoat peering at me from the roadside hedge some forty yards away. I quietly continued the work I was doing. The stoat, keeping to the hedge, came nearer. Then he sat up and had a long inspection.

Some sudden movement on my part sent him scuttling into cover. A few minutes later he was back once more watching me. For some little time this went on, the stoat several times retreating out of sight only to reappear after a short interval. At last some more violent movement on my part must have scared him, or perhaps the breeze had carried my scent to him. Whatever the cause he disappeared and I saw him no more.

The stoat's habit of changing colour in winter is worthy of notice. It is well known that ermine—the white fur decorated with black tips for the ceremonial robes of royalty, peers and judges—is merely the winter coat of the common stoat. This complete change to pure white, however, is only brought about under semi-arctic conditions. In Britain our winters are so mild that only a partial change takes place.

Occasionally, even in a mild English winter, individual stoats respond much more than others to this seasonal colouring change. I once saw what looked like a piece of white paper being blown across a grass field three hundred yards away. On focusing my glasses on it I saw that it was a stoat hunting. I kept him in view with ease as he crossed several fields, his white colour making him extremely conspicuous on either grass or ploughed land. Such a colour under average English winter conditions is, of course, the very reverse of protective.

Examination of such white stoats trapped or shot in England nearly always shows the colour change to be incomplete, traces of the brown fur still showing amongst the white on sides and back.

As already mentioned, the stoat is one of the very few carnivorous animals commonly met with in this country. I do not suggest that this shortage of predaceous animals is a matter for regret as not a little of our abundant bird life may be due to this comparative absence of the birds' natural four-footed enemies. But it does give additional interest to the few species of carnivores we have left.

Much of this freedom from predaceous animals—and predaceous birds too—is undoubtedly due to our intensive system of game preservation. The gamekeeper has to all intents and purposes banished the wild cat, polecat and pine-marten. Only in certain wild and mountainous districts in Scotland (and possibly Wales) do a few members of these species continue to carry on a precarious existence.

The popularity of hunting has undoubtedly saved the fox from a similar fate! No such reason protects the stoat. Yet it succeeds in maintaining its numbers in most parts of the country in spite of the intensive warfare perpetually waged against it. This is curious because it cannot be described as a highly intelligent animal. A stoat has not the instinctive fear of, and the cunning to avoid, a trap which the fox possesses. Indeed, were his habits more regular he would fall an easy victim. It is because he moves about from place to place erratically that he is difficult to trap. A trap set in a run-way with the intention of catching him is more likely to claim a cat, rat, rabbit, or hedgehog as a victim. Probably more stoats are caught in traps set in rabbit holes, for the purpose of catching rabbits, than in any other way. A stoat's business in life constantly takes him in and out of such places, hence he often falls a victim.

And yet a keeper finds it very difficult to rid his ground completely of stoats. Even when he is successful by assiduous attention in reducing their numbers to the point of extinction, it is not long before his ground suffers from an incursion of stoats from unkept ground in the neighbourhood, or from some adjoining estate where the keepers are not so energetic as himself.

Recent changes such as the break-up of many large estates all over the country have led to a decrease in the acreage where intensive preservation is carried on. This has increased the number of acres where vermin can multiply with little interference from man and suggests that not in our time will the stoat go the way of his relatives the polecat and pinemarten and become a rarity in our country-side.

*'CURSED BE HE . . .'*

*A BUSHVELD TRAGI-COMEDY.*

BY C. R. PRANCE.

It is an old saying, good even in the Bush, that a liar should cultivate a good memory; and though liar may be too hard a word for a man merely what South Africa calls 'slim,' even to him a sound memory is an asset. But of course a war, upsetting the peaceful routine of the bushveld farmer for three whole years, upsets a man's memory as well; and even a wife cannot be expected to do all her man's remembering in addition to her own; so that one can but pity Oom Stoffel van der Blouberg for the scandal which, after years of wealth and dignity, brought down his grey hairs and patriarchal beard with sorrow and ridicule to an untimely grave, as is remembered in one of Tante Rebella's simple chronicles.

Oom Stoffel had sold out his ancestral property at the Cape and trekked up eleven hundred miles by road to settle in the Transvaal on the Mokwani River, which is the boundary between the districts of Skrandenberg and Slaapenveld, just after the first 'English War' of 1880, when Oom Paul Kruger's government had cleared out a lot of useless 'black stuff' which was cumbering the goodly bushveld, and sent a Commission to beacon-off their land roughly into farms for some of the burghers who were trekking away in swarms from the English bondage in the Cape, to the Promised Land which the old Voortrekkers had found and were too few to fill.

It was a good farm, Katnaalboschfontein, with the river all down one side, all open bush and sweet-veld with no poison-plant anywhere, sheltered against the winter south-easter by the stately Kasteelberg; though it was ten days' trek to Stilstad with a dozen 'drifts' to be mended by the traveller and new tracks cut for miles after every heavy rain. But that mattered less after old Aaron Silbermann opened a 'goedkoop winkel,' a general store, on the farm; Oom Aaron, who had started as pedlar carrying his pack himself and had quickly earned promotion to a pair of pack-donkeys and then to a couple of wagons with sixteen donkeys each.



Indeed, the opening of the store was profitable to Oom Stoffel as well as to the Jew, because in the lease it was written that Oom Stoffel must have the right to buy everything at 'landed cost' and current market-price for everything he wished to sell; and now he could hire out his wagons to the Jew for the trek to Stilstad, instead of the trouble of driving them himself for nothing whenever he wanted to buy or sell anything. And presently he gave the Church Council a stand near to the store, and got the Mokwani neighbours to build a church between themselves; so that like Mahomet who went to the mountain the Predikant had now to trek out to hold the 'Nagmaal,' the quarterly Communion, and Oom Stoffel was free to sit all year on his stoep reading his Book, instead of having to trek a week in to church and back again every three months.

Then too the Jew opened a Postal Agency at the winkel, which was a help to the business in many ways; because when a person comes to wait half the day for his letters in a shop, he is sure to buy something, even if it is something he does not want and his wife says is horrible; and, even if he does not pay, it is charged up in the bill. But there was other profit too, since if a farmer wanted a penny stamp, Oom Aaron could never change a shilling and said the Government would not allow him to sell stamps on credit, so that the farmer had to take his change in something off the shelf at 20 per cent. profit on 'landed cost'; and as landed cost included all that Oom Aaron had to pay in railway rates and agent's charges in the dorp and the hire of Oom Stoffel's wagons too, the more that the railway and Oom Stoffel charged, the more profit Oom Aaron got by not having change for a shilling when he sold a penny stamp. Besides, when a child came with a letter which Ma had sent to post with an egg to pay the stamp, Oom Aaron could always say that eggs were dirt-cheap to-day and the child must run back to tell Ma to send another egg and Oom Aaron would give her a little sugar to pay the difference.

The bigger Oom Aaron's profits, the bigger was his rent of course, so that Oom Stoffel profited by all this civilisation too. Yet as so often happens, the blessing was double-edged, because the Post Agency and the building of the church meant many wagons coming to outspan on the farm; and presently Oom Stoffel began to find his veld too small, and though there was always grass on the empty farms behind, it was too far from the river to send the cattle there to graze. Besides, the farm was not



a good square shape, as it would have been if the Commission had known its business and put the south-eastern beacon in its proper place. So as the next farm was empty and only belonged to a Land Company of Londoners, Oom Stoffel took his Kafirs one night to build a new beacon in the proper place and pull the old one down; and before the police had a chance to make Oom Stoffel pay them not to notice it, the second 'English War' broke out, which made everyone forget everything except the English and their wickedness.

Of course, Oom Stoffel was too old to fight, besides being rich enough to buy a medical certificate, so he stopped at home and all the neighbours gave him their cattle to mind 'on shares' while they went to deliver the Cape and Natal Afrikanders from bondage to the English; and all the last two years Oom Stoffel had to dodge the English Army, keeping his mob of cattle cunningly in the kloofs and hidden valleys behind the Kasteelberg. They never found him, but whenever an English regiment marched by, he sent his Kafirs to round-up all the animals they had lost and put his brand on them; so with all that and his share of the increase of the neighbours' cattle for three years, Oom Stoffel was quite a rich man at the Peace of Vereeniging, though as he had lost almost nothing in the war he got very little on his Compensation Claim, only enough to replace his old clay homestead by a bigger one built of brick. But it was still a trouble that his compensation was so small, and made him more glad to be able to forget about the moving of that beacon, while he sat all day smoking and hating the English on his stoep; because now his cattle were truly too many for the farm even with its better shape.

So he was very angry when one day a Cape cart came to the house with a khaki Colonel, who said 'Hah-de-doo' and called him 'My good man,' and then said he must lease six acres of Oom Stoffel's farm for a Police Post at £6 a year. But when Oom Stoffel said he would not have the smell of khaki on his farm for £6 a day, the Colonel replied that if Oom Stoffel refused a lease, Lord Milner would 'expropriate,' which meant that he would take it for nothing just as Oom Paul Kruger had taken the whole bushveld from the 'black stuff' twenty years before.

Well, Oom Stoffel saw he was 'up against it' as the English say, and at last he agreed to the lease, only insisting that the six acres must be in the corner of the farm where he could not see or hear the policemen talking English from his stoep; though

afterwards when he found the sergeant was a good fellow who kept 'Medical Comforts' in his box, he was sometimes sorry that the Police Post was so far away.

So for eight years Oom Stoffel drew his £6 a year of English money as payment for a Police Post to protect his cattle against Kafir thieves, and then a horrible thing happened. The new Government sent down a surveyor to the bushveld to make the 'General Survey' of all the farms; and though it was no longer an English government but Botha himself was at its head, this surveyor was one of Milner's imported foreigners, who did not know the ways of the veld, and said that Oom Stoffel's south-eastern beacon was in the wrong place; and when the surveyor had moved the beacon back to where he said it must have been first put up by the Commission, the Police Post was not on Oom Stoffel's farm at all. It was enough to make even a Church Elder angry; but it was worse next month, when Oom Stoffel got a letter from a Pretoria lawyer, saying the owners of the next farm claimed £48 with interest for all the years that Oom Stoffel had drawn rent for their six acres, and that if it went to Court Oom Stoffel would have to pay the lawyers on both sides as well.

It was 'a tight place' as the English sergeant said over a tot of Medical Comfort; so Oom Stoffel trekked in to Stilstad to see his lawyer, who charged him a pound for telling him he had a poor case, but might try what the English call 'a bluff.' So Oom Stoffel went home and moved the beacon back again by night, making his Kafirs plant moss and grass in it so that it looked truly old again; and wrote to the Pretoria lawyer to say that the surveyor was only a 'rooinek' foreigner who did not know the bushveld, and that a jury of the neighbours would swear the beacon had always stood in what the surveyor called the wrong place. And of course they would, because it was only a London Company which owned the next farm, though Africa was given by the Lord to Afrikanders and not to foreigners from oversea; and besides, most of the neighbours still owed Oom Stoffel for cattle which they had bought from him after the 'English War.'

But a Zulu policeman told the sergeant that he had seen Oom Stoffel's Kafirs moving the beacon back; and when the surveyor came down again next winter to inspect, he put the beacon back again in its wrong place and said things to Oom Stoffel which only an Englishman would say to an Elder of the Church with such a long white beard, telling him it would mean two years for him in

gaol like a Kafir if the beacon lost itself again. And Oom Stoffel had to pay his lawyer another whole pound, only for advising him to pay up the £48 with interest and all the costs and the £6 for another year. So now he had the Police Post in what he still looked on as his veld, without getting paid for it; which made the neighbours laugh till he died of anger at the injustice and the shame; and his death led to the war between Oom Piet, his brother, and the Predikant, which got so fierce that Oom Piet said he would rather be re-married or even buried by the English minister.

It was the next Sunday after Oom Stoffel's burial, with the whole kindred in church and all the neighbours from the country round, and in the Lesson for the day was a sentence about 'Cursed be he that moveth his neighbour's landmark,' which truly had nothing to do with backveld farmers because it was written by Moses against the Jews; and most of the people had forgotten the joke against Oom Stoffel over his beacon long ago; till as the Predikant read it, he stopped to look over his spectacles at Oom Piet, and that made everyone remember, so that a lot of people had to cough because it is 'verboden' for Afrikanders to laugh inside the church. But Oom Piet was so angry that he went right out in the middle of the Lesson, to say outside what was in his soul about the Predikant, and then he inspanned and drove straight off home, though in those days only Englishmen dared to travel on the Sabbath for fear of thunderstorms.

Perhaps even a Predikant, unless he is a grandfather too, ought not to suggest that an Elder might be cursed by the Lord, only because an ignorant foreigner had put a farm-beacon back in its wrong place. But Tante Rebella still thinks there may have been something in that text after all, because of what happened to Oom Stoffel's widow, Tante Emmerentia, who lived on at the farm all alone except for her Kafir servants, because the Lord had not allowed any of her children to grow up.

She was quite an old thing of course, but everyone said that Oom Stoffel had buried a lot of money under the bedroom floor, so there were plenty of men wanting to marry her property before it was too late; and amongst them was a rascally Irish 'rooinek' whose real name had been Pat Murphy till he changed it to Piet van der Merwe when he turned Afrikander to fight against Cromwell's England in Paul Kruger's Freedom War. He was not half her age, but old women will often get silly about boys, and with

his Irish tongue he made a fool of her, calling her 'girlie' and 'goosey' and all the nonsense which boys talk even to old girls, saying he would be both son and husband to her if she would only love him just a little bit. And of course she did not know that he had spied on the joint will which she and Oom Stoffel had made, leaving all their property to the one that died the last.

With her age and with getting bushveld fever every year she was too soft in the head to see he was a rascal, and at last, though the neighbours laughed and said it was like an old ewe with her leggy he-lamb running at her side, she promised to marry him if he would get a special licence and trek her to Pretoria, because she would not forgive the Stilstad Predikant for what he had said after Oom Stoffel's funeral. So Pat borrowed £50 from Oom Isaac, the new Jew storekeeper, for a month at a shilling interest in the pound and five per cent. discount off for cash, which meant that Pat signed for £50 though he only got £45, because Oom Isaac said interest was always paid in advance; and in Pretoria they were married 'in community of goods' because Pat had said that having an 'ante-nuptial contract' would look as if she distrusted 'the apple of her eye.'

Then, when the books and papers were all signed, and all the lawyers and everybody paid, Pat's money was almost finished, and he went to the bank to pawn the farm for enough to pay Oom Isaac's £50 and the worst of his other debts. But the banker looked in books and spoke to the telephone, and found that the farm had only belonged to Oom Stoffel for his life 'and his children after him,' so that now it must go to his nephews after Tante's death, and could not be mortgaged without their consent.

That 'tore it' as the English say, and Pat van der Murphy was like a wounded buffalo with rage, to find he had married a sickly great-aunt for nothing and had to pawn his new suit for money to buy food for the trek back to the farm. And as soon as they got home, Oom Isaac got a judgment against Pat for the £50 and seized Tante's harmonium and her 'bedroom suite' for the debt; because she was married to Pat 'in community of goods,' which meant that all his debts were hers and all her property belonged to his creditors. And that night, as they lay on the hard clay floor, Tante began to howl for grief with the cold and shame, till Pat got tired of her noise and took the best blanket with some bread and meat, to walk off in the dark to Rhodesia, where he could turn Murphy again and get a divorce from Tante for deserting

him. But he need not have walked so far, because she was dead of what the English novels call 'broken heart' before Pat had been able to borrow enough money to pay a lawyer to begin the case for the divorce. And Tante Rebella thinks it served her right for taking a foreigner for her second man in Oom Stoffel's place.

### GOOD GRASS GROWING.

I PASSED through the valley of the Dead.  
There was no pain left there, and  
No tear shed.  
The trees by the grey-black Styx were growing  
Straight and dark as the river flowing.  
The Dead were shadows withouten sorrow,  
Softly they moved,  
Fearing no morrow,  
Mourning nothing, nothing knowing.  
(Cold as it swept was the grey Styx flowing.)  
Down in the valley of the Dead  
There is no pain left, there is no  
Tear shed.  
It almost seemed  
That the Dead were sleeping,  
And that they dreamed.

I passed from noiselessness to sound,  
I passed from the dark to the upper ground,  
I came to the world of dying years,  
To a world of vigil and blood-thick tears,  
Where the living die, yet yearn again  
To pluck the harp that voices pain.  
I felt the wind's whip on my head.  
There is no wind where Shadows tread.

How sweet to reach the Springset air,  
And see the good grass growing there!

HONOR E. M. WYATT.

# DR. JOHNSON'S PETTED LADY.

BY A. E. SNODGRASS.

A HUNDRED years ago one of the most dynamic and versatile personalities of her time joined the Legion of the Silent. On September 7, 1833, Hannah More died at Clifton after a crowded and varied career. Her life has many claims to resurrection in the printed page. One that cannot be ignored is that her fame as an authoress was spread over a period of eighty years and lasted until near the middle of the nineteenth century. A goodly span in a nation's history. And it was not an age that suffered fools or groped in unenlightenment.

Hannah More was a daring adventuress of the pen. She was successful as dramatist, poet, essayist, and story-writer. Many of her writings soared into best sellers. And while she flourished on fiction, she grappled strenuously with fact; she was a practical and untiring philanthropist.

Purple in the patches of her life was her Johnsonian era. She belonged—a distinguished member—to that select coterie who drank tea with Dr. Johnson and hearkened to those candid and pontifical judgments on everything under the sun which the faithful Boswell so meticulously records. Doubtless she even 'listened in' when the great Doctor exercised his habit of talking to himself, thus seeking food for her flattery in every chance utterance. For she was an irrepressible flatterer. Johnson had to reprove the excesses of her hero-worship, though he never ceased to pet and admire her, calling her his 'little fool,' his 'love,' and his 'dearest.' Once he avowed her the 'most powerful versificatrix in the English language,' a dictum which appears a 'large order' on the first blush until we remember that the erudite lexicographer, with a covert twinkle in his eye, was fully aware that versification and poetry are not synonymous terms.

What pleased Dr. Johnson and made Hannah one of his prime favourites is not difficult to discover. She had vivacity in abundance—youthful vivacity—and a witty tongue as ally, and to strengthen and vitalise these natural gifts she had the solid foundation of an excellent education. She was no dunce amidst the



professors, no zany in the cast. Like Boswell, whose *Life of Johnson* is also a 'Life of Boswell,' she had a lot to say for herself.

She sprang from hale Norfolk stock. Her father, a schoolmaster trained for Holy Orders, was a descendant of Cromwellian captains; her mother was a farmer's daughter endowed with the essence of common sense. Hannah, the fourth of five daughters, showed unusual talent at an early age. She knew how to read before she was four through listening to her sister's lessons. Her nurse had ministered to Dryden in his last illness, and that circumstance set the child's mind rampant on poetry. At eight her father was reading Plutarch to her, and was 'almost frightened' when she took so avidly to Latin and mathematics. Later her sisters opened a boarding school in Bristol, and Hannah adeptly utilised the opportunity to become accomplished in French, Spanish and Italian.

She had an attack of the *cacoëthes scribendi* when other children were having the measles, but it was not until she had reached seventeen years that any of her effusions met the public eye. The first to be published was *The Search for Happiness*, a pastoral play. Soon after came a drama, founded on the opera of *Regulus*, which she entitled *The Inflexible Captive*. These efforts set the ball rolling; and then came an event which lifted the ambitious and energetic girl free of financial anxieties and put her literary ship into full sail in a favouring wind.

A curious romance attaches to this event. It was a kind of eighteenth-century breach of promise case. She was twenty-two when a rich Mr. Turner who lived near Bristol made her an offer of marriage. Mr. Turner was a sedate man of forty-two, and had a peculiar temper, but he was a gentleman and accomplished, and Hannah accepted him. The wedding day was fixed, but Mr. Turner had it postponed. It was fixed again and again, but the hesitant lover always had some ingenious excuse for delay.

For six years the bride was ready, but the bridegroom shunned the altar rails. Hannah could at last bear the strain no longer; a clergyman intervened and the engagement was cancelled. All regret and humility, Mr. Turner eagerly offered £200 a year as compensation. The patient *fiancée* scornfully declined any largess, but the clergyman friend became a surreptitious trustee for the fund, until in the end Hannah was persuaded to accept its solace. Mr. Turner remained an ardent admirer, and when he died he left Hannah £1,000. The effect of the abortive courtship on Hannah was that she resolved never to marry. All suitors should plead

to her in vain, and soon after the Turner fiasco one did come forward only to find that her decision was irrevocable.

Wedding bells silenced for ever after being so jangled and out of tune, our authoress embarked on a fresh adventurous voyage. In 1774 she came to London and at once the floodgates of a joyous existence were opened. Garrick was responsible. Meeting him, a close friendship sprang up in which the beautiful Mrs. Garrick, the Viennese ex-dancer, cordially joined. Garrick introduced the bright Miss More to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and at the latter's house she first met Dr. Johnson. Her cup of delight was brimming over when the Doctor's own house saw her as a guest. She worshipped at his shrine; he was fascinated by her sparkle. Now was she in the inner temple of the intelligensia, *vis-à-vis* with all the great ones.

She became one of the first of the Blue Stockings, and consequently helped to coin that term for female pedantry which has passed into the currency of the language. The Blue Stocking clubs were assemblies of literary ladies formed to 'refine' fashionable society and rescue it from the tyranny of whist and quadrille. To Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu belongs the distinction of inventing these highbrow conversational parties, and she reigned queen of them for nearly fifty years. The cream of London's wit and talent flocked to her *salon*. Card-playing was banned, and everyone strove to 'talk up' to the level of Burke, Horace Walpole, Dr. Johnson, Garrick and other stars of the town.

The origin of the epithet Blue Stocking is variously explained. Boswell tells us that a certain Benjamin Stillingfleet, who wrote natural history tracts, was a frequent attendant at the gatherings and that he invariably wore blue worsted stockings instead of the conventional black silk ones. His conversation was voted so alluring that when he chanced to be absent the ladies chorused, 'We can do nothing without the blue stockings'; and so by degrees the name became established. In the *Life of Mrs. Piozzi*, however, we are told that the ladies at Mrs. Montagu's parties wore blue stockings in imitation of a fashionable French visitor, Madame de Polignac. Hannah More describes a Blue Stocking club in her poem 'Bas Bleu.' She was a popular member of Mrs. Montagu's circle for many years, and 'talked big' as assiduously as any of them. But she was never obsessed by these bizarre fraternities or sisterhoods. Her hereditary attribute of common sense saved her from the mental priggishness they so largely represented.

Dr. Johnson's friendship for Hannah More emerges again and again in the graphic pages of Boswell. At breakfasts, at dinners, and over the oceans of tea she was at the great man's elbow. When she spoke herself it was always to the point—and, happier still, she was a divine listener. Once she made bold to express her wonder that a poet who had written 'Paradise Lost' should write such poor sonnets. Johnson replied: 'Milton, madam, was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry stones.'

There was a racy incident after a dinner at Mrs. Garrick's house in the Adelphi. The company included Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Burney, Miss Hannah More, and, of course, Boswell, who shall tell the story in his own inimitable way.

'Talking of a very respectable author he (Johnson) told us a curious circumstance in his life which was that he married a printer's devil.

'REYNOLDS: A printer's devil, sir! Why, I thought a printer's devil was a creature with a black face and in rags.

'JOHNSON: Yes, sir. But I suppose he had her face washed and put clean clothes on her. And she did not disgrace him; the woman had a bottom of good sense.

'The word *bottom* thus introduced was so ludicrous when contrasted with his gravity that most of us could not forbear tittering and laughing; though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's back. His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule when he did not intend it; he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotic power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone: "Where's the merriment?"

'Then collecting himself and looking awful to make us feel how he could impose restraint, he slowly pronounced "I say the woman was *fundamentally* sensible;" as if he had said "Hear this now and laugh if you dare." We all sat composed as at a funeral.'

Hannah had not long been in London moving among the giants of the day ere her literary bent, always taut for action, felt a fresh urge. In 1776 she published a ballad, 'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' which was extravagantly praised by the highest authorities. The following year Garrick produced her tragedy of *Percy*, playing the principal part himself. It ran for twenty-one nights at Covent Garden, and was soon being acted in the provinces. It was trans-

lated into French and was performed in a German version at Vienna. Mrs. Siddons revived it in 1787. Another play, *The Fatal Falsehood*, was written for Garrick. It was not acted until 1779, after his death; it was not a success.

The death of Garrick had a profound influence on our authoress. It diverted her mind on to an entirely new track. The gaieties of London life became as ashes to her, repellent. She developed a stern dislike for the theatre and would not enter one. Even when Mrs. Siddons presented her *Percy* tragedy and infused her genius and renown into the leading part she would not go to see her.

This radical change when Garrick passed away makes one wonder if it might have been that her devotion to the actor went far deeper than mere friendship. Biographers give no hint of any love romance; perhaps the disparity of ages warns them off. But the idea is not fantastic, though Garrick was twenty-nine years her elder. At any rate, like Viola, she never told her love—so far as we know. Her admiration, however, knew no bounds. Before she had met him personally she saw him as Lear and fell instantly an idolater to his magnetism. 'I pity those who have not seen him,' she wrote later. 'Posterity will never be able to form the slightest idea of his perfection; the more I see him the more I admire.'

If pity be akin to love how much more kindred is rapt admiration.

But whatever the precise psychological causes of her sudden loathing for all that pertained to the art of the defunct Garrick, the effects were revolutionary. She began now to pour out moral and religious works by the ream. William Wilberforce became one of her close friends, and she reinforced him in his fight to abolish negro slavery. About this time she cheered and guided the youth of Macaulay, giving him his first books and often entertaining him at her country residences at Cowslip Green and Barley Wood near Bristol.

Surely and not slowly the erstwhile rhymester, playwright, blithe Blue Stocking, and gay Society lady was transfigured—to stand disclosed as an ardent philanthropist who literally in word and deed enacted her newly assumed rôle.

With the support of her sisters she set to work to improve the lot of the children in the rural districts contiguous to her native heath. She found ignorance, distress and irreligion in profusion; one Bible in a whole parish and that serving to prop up a flower-pot.

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In a number of 'almost barbarous' English villages she established Sunday schools, evening readings, sewing classes for the mothers, holiday feast days, and bright 'improving' parties. She was far removed in purpose from the educationist of to-day—her aim was ever to keep the poor in their 'proper place'—but she endeavoured to enlighten the darkness of the bucolic mind with such well-tried torches as the Bible and the Catechism. Her motives were pure and lofty, and the pursuit of them entailed real self-sacrifice. In her serene old age, says one chronicler, philanthropists from all parts of the world made pilgrimages to see the bright and amiable old lady, who died at Clifton at the mature age of eighty-seven.

She lighted many candles in a naughty world, but of Hannah More, the authoress, time in its ruthless march has a different and dimmer story to tell. It cannot be said that she has bequeathed us any literary legacies. Strange this, for her contemporary appeal was enormous. The huge sale of her writings made countless authors mourn. Her tragedy of *Percy* was printed and 4,000 copies were sold in a fortnight. The most popular of her works, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, a kind of sermon masquerading as a novel, ran through eleven editions at twelve shillings a copy. Thirty editions were eagerly bought in America. The book was translated into Icelandic, and other of her writings found their way into Persian and Cingalese. Nearly everything that came from her pen appeared in European languages possessing a literature.

As a tract writer she built up stupendous fame, and her success led to the foundation in 1799 of the renowned Religious Tract Society. Her output in this line began in 1792, when, goaded by the French Revolution into an anti-blast, she wrote a pamphlet called *Village Politics*. It was anonymous; 'by Will Chip' said the title-page. But the authorship soon became common knowledge when the leaflet sold like wild fire. Thousands of copies were sent by the Government to Scotland and Ireland, and patriotic people had large editions printed at their own personal expense. Then for three years she turned out three tracts a month which were put on sale for a penny each. Cobbett was delighted and helped to boom them. In the first year 2,000,000 were sold. Her little *Sacred Dramas* also had a wide circulation at home and abroad. A rapid writer, her production was colossal. In 1818 her works were collected in nineteen volumes. She died leaving about £30,000, which was assigned chiefly in legacies to charitable institutions and religious societies.



Efficiency, tense industry, and unshakable common sense were the chief weapons in her armoury. To juggle with a famous phrase, she never had a brilliant thought and never wrote a bad one. In adopting fiction as a means of conveying religious instruction she inaugurated a vogue—and quite a commendable one. But she was swamped by her own fatal facility, the cataract of a fecundity of words, words, words. She was an excellent, gossipy letter-writer, and, indeed, it is more pleasurable to read her letters than any of her formal writings.

Some writers live for their time : some for all time. She missed the long excursion ; her ticket expired on the day trip. If we can appraise the real metal from a book of quotations, Bartlett was a good valuer. He gives her eight lines, all too undistinguished, alas, to quote. A kindly scrutiny of her compositions tempts only two extracts. In her poem ' Florio,' dedicated to Horace Walpole, she limns the old Tory squire rather well :

' He dreaded nought like alteration,  
Improvement still was innovation ;  
He said when any change was brewing  
Reform was a fine name for ruin :  
This maxim firmly he would hold  
" That must be always good that's old."'

In her play *Percy* I find the following :

' If there's a sin more deeply black than others,  
Distinguished from the list of common crimes,  
A legion in itself and doubly dear  
To the dark Prince of Hell it is—Hypocrisy.'

Notwithstanding the chilling judgment of posterity, no hypocrisy is needed for us to raise a glass in memory of Hannah More. She was, at any rate, a very notable and zealous woman of her day, if, virtually, within her day. If she had lived later she might have been a Suffragette. She was a fine fighter.



**'FOR RICHER FOR POORER.'**

BY E. CE. SOMERVILLE, Litt.D., AND MARTIN ROSS.

'HASTE to the Wedding' is a light-hearted and cheerful tune that suggests cutting capers and dancing jigs, and holds no hint of Romance, or of the gravity of the Holy Estate of Matrimony. Still less does one associate its laughing gaiety with the austerity of Finance. Yet there are not many marriages among the country-people of Southern Ireland that are not based on sound business principles, and on the traditional assertion that there isn't the value of a cow between any two women—which may, from one point of view, be true, but is a rather crude and one-sided way of putting it.

It is one of Ireland's many inconsistencies that in affairs of the heart she is strictly practical, while in the practical affair of Politics she is inveterately romantic. But, so thorough is her inconsistency, these State alliances, founded though they may be on the commonplace of financial security, have a way of making for happiness that love matches do not invariably achieve, and one begins dispassionately to wonder if the Romantics and the Poets haven't been wrong all the time, and the stern, business-like parents right.

As Martin Ross has said in an article on this same subject: <sup>1</sup>

'Writers of novels, and readers of novels, had better shut their eyes to the fact, the inexorable fact, that such marriages are rushed into every day—loveless, sordid marriages, such as we are taught to hold in abhorrence, and that from them springs, like a flower from a dust heap, the unsullied, uneventful home-life of Western Ireland. It is romance that holds the two-edged sword, the sharp ecstasy and the severing scythe stroke, the expectancy and the disillusioning, the trance and the clearer vision.

'It is even more than passive domestic toleration that blossoms in the cramped and dirty cabin life, affection grows with years, and where personal attraction never counted for much, the loss of it hurts nobody.'

So it is that a Mother could say approvingly of an elderly suitor, advanced by a match-maker, 'He's a warm man and he have a

<sup>1</sup> 'In Sickness and in Health,' *Some Irish Yesterdays*. First appeared in CORNHILL, September, 1906.

nate house. Sure he's not all out so old at all! If it were to be Mary was married in the country near me, I'd stand still in my mind, and I'd stand in peace in my mind.'

And the Father could add that he had the land walked and it would carry a good share of cattle, and there was no doubt that the proposed husband was a nice respectable quiet man, and he had turf stacked for years. That is to say abundant firing. What more could be asked?

It cannot, however, be denied that the high contracting parties sometimes take risks. There was a marriage that happened so long ago that it is now ancient history (and therefore possibly apocryphal), when all the eyes concerned were wide open, but the risk was faced. The scene was a small provincial town, in—or so I have heard—the County Clare; one of those neighbourly little towns where everyone knows a good deal more about everyone else than they know themselves. So it was no secret that the Bridegroom, a very well-to-do young man, 'took a drop.' In fact, when it was known that he had chosen as his Best Man a friend of like passions with himself, the Bride's Mother insisted on an understudy, 'for,' she said, 'no doubt Tom'—the Bridegroom—'would have a drop taken, and maybe between himself and Dick'—(the Best Man)—'who might also, it was likely, take a drop for himself, the ring itself might go astray on them.'

So what was genially spoken of as a Second-best Man was nominated. On the wedding morning the Best Men agreed that their charge would be the better for 'something to put blood in his eye' before the ceremony, and three bottles of champagne were procured for the purpose. The regrettable result of this precaution was that when the priest tendered the Bridegroom the book with the ring on it, the Bridegroom, taking the priest by force and surprise, crammed the ring on to his thumb. A violent struggle ensued, in the course of which the ring, having, with considerable difficulty, been removed from his thumb by the priest, undoubtedly went astray on them, for it fell down a hot-air grating and was lost for ever in the bowels of the church.

A hurried consultation ensued, during which it is said that the waiting Bridegroom fell asleep. The Bride's Mother, being anxious to avoid postponement, since the breakfast was prepared, laid all blame on the Best Men. The Bridegroom's Mother, saying it was a shame for them two fellas to hoodwink the poor boy that way, giving him drink and him nervous enough already, sent forth an

emissary to buy another ring. And the Bride, who had been well taught to remember that those whom her mother was accustomed to speak of compassionately as 'the min, God help us!' were by reason of their sex and the frailty of their natures to be excused, was undaunted by a bad start.

So the service was concluded.

After this it was found advisable to withdraw the Bridegroom and the Best Men from the festivities, and to put them temporarily to bed at a neighbouring hotel. It is said that the subsequent married life thus, rather unfortunately, begun, was entirely happy and satisfactory, and was no exception to the rule that marriages based on sound commercial principles do credit to the judgment of those who have arranged them.

Happily for story-tellers the rule is not without exceptions. There is, for example, the case of Slow Jerry. Jerry determined to soothe the latter days of his pilgrimage by taking to himself a wife, who should not only serve as nurse and general slave in his household, but should also bring a dowry that would contribute to its maintenance. He was then near sixty years old, a mature age that was in keeping with his general habit of deliberation, and it was unlucky that when delay and careful consideration were advisable, he should have shown a rare and, as the event proved, inopportune impetuosity. It was his sister who told the story of his marriage, and, unexpectedly, it was his mercenariness and not his sloth that she denounced.

'Jerry had a right not to be so covetious,' said the sister, a stout, foxy countrywoman, very unlike her brother, who with his red beard and thin saintly face, looked like a starved apostle. 'But he was all for the money! Sure when he had his mind made to get marri'd, I told him of one that'd suit him to fortune, an' I said I'd make the match for him—a nice decent quiet widda woman; ye'd couldn't but like her, she was so blushy and respectable.'

The question as to whether her charms, in addition to complexion and social standing, included a balance at the Bank, was received by Jerry's sister with a sarcastic laugh.

'Ye've hit it now, faith!' she said, approvingly. 'The husband died on her, and she hadn't what'd keep herself but as little. This woman he's after marryin' is as cross as briars, but when Jerry heard she had forty pound, six shillin', and two pence in the post office, nothing would content him only to marry her. Three days before the marriage I went to her and I seduced her to get out the

forty pound, and herself and meself took down the pass-book to the post-masther's to try could we get the money. But the post-masther said we could not for three days, and I said to Jerry "Take my advice and wait the three days!" But sure he wouldn't be said by me. He wouldn't wait the three days. And that was the end of it. It was for the sake o' the forty pound he marri'd her, and she was that crabbed all she'd give him was the book! And what good was that to him? She had her mind changed to leave the forty pound in the post office. She wouldn't give him a ha'penny! If he were to die dead she wouldn't give him an egg itself!

She paused for a moment, not so much to draw breath as to give me time to offer a suitable comment, while she put back a straying lock of red hair that the denunciations of her sister-in-law had loosened from under the black shawl that covered her head.

'And cross!' she continued. 'Sure she's dancin' before him always, tearing the face off him! God knows I melted her there to the divil under me teeth on Sunday after chapel!'

I could wish to have viewed that scene, from a safe distance—behind the chapel gate perhaps (but within earshot)—I question if any theatre in Europe could have staged its equal.

'He was ill there three days, above in the room, and all she done was turn the kay in the door and go out! If it was a young hen that'd be worth a sixpence she'd let him die for the want of it! And look!' She shot a lean hand from under the black shawl, her green eyes sparkling. 'Didn't That One think he hadn't but a few months o' life in him, and look at him now! He's not sixty years at all! If he's fifty-five it's the heighth of him! He's one that'll last during duration! Ah-ha! The two o' them was took in—the one as good as th'other!'

But not always is Romance mocked and made subservient to Money, or Love thwarted by Expediency. There was a time, long ago, when a comely young coachman, made beautiful by the dashing livery of his now nearly obsolete office, loved an under-housemaid, a pretty pale girl, with the dark eyes and raven hair that had probably come down to her from some Spanish ancestor, who had been flung into West Carbery by the tempest that wrecked the Armada. (Have we not a long stretch of rocky coast that is called Spain in memory of those involuntary invaders?)

To these two Love came in the traditional fashion, free of the fetters of family and finance. They plighted their mutual troth, and settled down to wait.

Michael-John was his name, and hers was Mary-Ellen. In our country, if one possesses a second name, one makes it work for its living, and thus it is spared the degradation of shrivelling into an initial.

The orderly changeless years moved on. Michael-John's master was High Sheriff for the County one year, and Michael-John, looking more beautiful than ever in new livery, cocked hat and top-boots, drove his master and the Judge to the court-house, and wrote to Mary-Ellen saying 'Me and my horses is admired by all.' Which was no more than the truth, and was repeated reverentially by Mary-Ellen to all her friends. They 'walked-out' together every Sunday afternoon, pacing decorously side by side, speaking little, a space ever between them that was never crossed by a stealing hand seeking the peace and sense of completion that a touch can give. Carriage-horses, in the old days when such things were, had, undoubtedly, some power of silently communicating with one another. Barney, on the off side of the pole, would telepathically advise Larry, on the near, that there was a stone or a donkey worth shying at; and Larry would swing and curtsy with as appropriate panic as if he had seen either the one or the other.

Thus, one can only suppose, the souls of Michael-John and Mary-Ellen conversed, as, speechlessly, they moved side by side along the road consecrated by custom to walking-out. And thus the years passed, as is their relentless way, and still the souls of these faithful lovers had for consolation but the decorous Sunday walk. Michael-John had a father and a sister, the one very old, the other crippled, both very cross, both entirely reliant on him, and both firmly assured that Michael-John was theirs, to have and to hold till death them did part, quite regardless of Michael-John's possible views on the matter.

The carriage and its horses faded away; Michael-John became a chauffeur and ran to flesh. Mary-Ellen went to England, and worked hard, and grew thin. And thus for seventeen years the course of true love ran through dry and arid places. Tragic to think that it was over two graves that at last their hands were joined. One wonders if the father and the sister, looking on from the other side of death, felt any compunction for what had been their part in the affair. And yet why should they be penitent? 'They went'—as



a philosophical neighbour said—'when the time came for them, the cratures! Sure people can't be stopping alive for ever at all! They must go—worse luck!'

And so, in the latter end, Michael-John and Mary-Ellen were happy. When, after some two-score years, the time came for Michael-John, and he fell on the steering-wheel of the motor one day, and died, as a fellow-servant reported, as quietly as a little fish, Mary-Ellen could say, 'What'll the children and me do without him? We were so happy we were like four angels together.'

It may be said, and truly, that the success of this love-match was paid for by long and weary waiting, and that marriages made by authority have at least the merit of getting under way at once, and with a fair wind. Moreover, they contrive a double bet to pay, because they are often based upon a system of compensation. It is a very general custom that the dowry brought by a daughter-in-law is devoted to continuing its career as a dowry, by becoming the marriage-portion of the bridegroom's sister, a convenient arrangement which may, to some extent, explain the attempt to wreck the fortunes of two true lovers by certain youths whose sympathies should have been with them.

This is the story.

A match had been made for a young girl with a prosperous farmer who was something older than her father. That she had given her heart to a schoolfellow, a lad of her own age, was known to the negotiating family, but was ignored as a youthful fancy, not worthy of discussion. The Family, father, mother, brother, aunts and uncles, demanded to know, oratorically, and of no one in particular—what call had Nora to go agin her parents' arrangements? Surely themselves should know what was best for her!

Nora acquiesced. She viewed docilely the preparations for her wedding, the whisky, the tea, the cakes, and old Mickel-Paudeen the Piper, bespoke. She helped her mother to 'clean down' the house, and when all was ready, and she and the rest of the tired family had gone to bed, she slipped out of her bedroom window, and stole away to the cottage of a distant neighbour, a widow who had a feeling heart, and—what was equally valuable—an old-standing quarrel with Mr. William Horrigan, the prospective bridegroom. Also, the young lover was her nephew.

For two days the secret of the refuge was kept. The lover lost no time in making ready for the lass. At the second midnight



after the flight, Nora and the widow, waiting by the fireside for news, heard a tapping on the window-pane and knew who was there. All was ready, the ring was in his pocket, the priest was warned, and they would be married, quietly and early, the next morning.

The young man was a personable fellow, the girl was sweet and twenty. They sat side by side on two low stools by the fire, facing the Woman of the House, who was the boy's aunt. I expect she felt she was doing good work in admitting no impediment to the marriage of true minds, especially when the impediment took the form of her enemy, William Horrigan.

The turf fire had burned away to red and grey ashes before the talk had ended, and the Woman of the House felt that a move must be made.

'Run away home now, Johnny,' she said, 'tis late! 'Twill shortly be making day itself, and you have your work set for the morning!'

And Johnny was preparing to run away, when there came a thundering on the door of the cottage, and loud voices demanding admittance, shouting threats, swearing that dead or alive they would have what they came for.

'The back-door, Johnny!' hissed the Woman of the House, advancing to the fray, screaming defiance to the foe, hearing them without—as she afterwards narrated—'leppin' and rarin' an' ravin', holding them there by sheer force of abuse until she judged that Johnny had got well away. For two or three minutes only her blighting tongue held them, then they would be held no longer, and they kicked in the door, smashing the timber and wrenching the hinges, and burst into the house.

There were four of them, tall young men, all dressed alike—with, presumably, the idea of concealing their identity—in the white flannel jackets that are called '*bauneens*,' and grey homespun trousers, their faces half-covered by black masks, all full of '*taspy*' (which is a local word that denotes impudence and exuberance) and of what they felt to be the noble resolve to uphold parental authority.

The Woman of the House thrust the girl into that inner chamber that is known as Back-in-the-room, and planted herself in the doorway, daring the invaders to lay a finger on her or on her visitor, while the latter, having, in spite of the masks, recognized her brother and three of her cousins, denounced them by name over

the protecting shoulder of her hostess. One gathers that there then ensued an exchange of opinions of considerable violence, in the conduct of which the four young men were quite outclassed by the Woman of the House. Assuring them that she was prepared to swear to every one of them before any magistrate in any Court in the Globe of Ireland, she proceeded to offer, in the tones of a trombone, able and scandalous biographies of them, their parents, and their grandparents to the third and fourth generation. She threatened them with the penalties for housebreaking, pointing to the door that was hanging crookedly on a single hinge, and then, with a dramatic change of manner to a sinister politeness, she waved a skinny arm towards the gaping hole into the night that had been their work, and said :

'There's nothin' stopping ye ! Walk out, me gintlemin !'

The gentlemen, feeling that their mission had not turned out as they had expected, began to shuffle indeterminately towards the doorway. The Woman of the House snatched up her broom and took but one step forward, and her uninvited guests stayed not upon the order of their going, but went at once.

It may be added that the wedding of Nora and Johnny took place without interruption the following morning, and the 'summonses' to four young housebreakers were averted by the arrival of a carpenter with a new door.

It was during the last days of Shraft, before Ash Wednesday had forbidden all such worldly affairs as Matrimony, that I was paying a visit to a young country-woman, a widow, and the subject of marriage, as was appropriate to the time, came under discussion. I remember that she told me of the recent grand wedding of a rich elderly cattle-buyer, and when I asked her how he had made all the money, she replied, with a laugh :

' 'Tis what the people say he does be jobbing in widows ! This now is the third one he's got for himself !'

We were standing on the verge of the western cliffs, looking away across a rough grey sea to Cape Clear. The clouds were low, but not implacably low, there was a pale light over the horizon, and through a high rift in the cloudy roof a thin screen of silver reached from sky to sea, ending in a long dazzling streak. Seventy feet below us the sea was growling in the heart of a long cave, conquered in its onslaught by the iron rocks of that fierce coast. Every now and then a sullen boom, like a blast in a mine, followed by a puff of

white spray, told where an imprisoned wave had burst its way out of a cleft in the cliff that faced where we were standing. My widow owned a small farm that went back from the cliff to the hills. A lonely place; the small house and farm-sheds were down in a hollow below a high bank, on which some alder bushes and a few miserable wind-thrashed ash-trees tried to give protection from the south-westerly storms. She had a half-dozen of hungry little cattle and a handful of 'mountainy' sheep; her bare fields were islanded by a waste of rocks and furze; she lived a life as solitary as Robinson Crusoe's, save that the parts of Man Friday and the parrots were played by an old father and three little children.

She was a hardy, handsome creature, fair and weather-beaten, big and bony. She stood beside me in the sea wind, on the heathery ground over the cliff, firm as a tower, with a pair of men's big boots on her feet. It was easy to think of her tramping about her narrow fields, working like a man, the thought of the three children and the old man, all dependent on her, always in her mind. Perhaps she guessed at what I was thinking, for she said the times were hard enough, and it wasn't easy for one that'd be alone.

So I asked her whether she thought a married life or a single one was the happier.

She considered a moment, her sea-blue eyes remote and thoughtful. Then she said:

'Well indeed it is what I think, once ye'd got over the disgrace of it, a single life 'd be the more airy. But faith!' she added with a laugh, 'if ye get marri'd, or if ye stay single, it's aigual which way it is, ye'll be sorry!'

## *A JACOBITE FAMILY.*

BY MRS. A. P. TROTTER.

ON the table before me lies a tiny portfolio covered in cut silk velvet, pale blue with black flowers, lined with a pink satin that has withstood the fading of the years. It dates from the year 1745, and within it are kept two of the roses of tinted cambric made by Isabella Lumisden to be worn in honour of Prince Charlie. They were donned on the day when, after the Battle of Preston Pans, at the triumphal entry of Charles Edward into Edinburgh, the ladies, as Sir Walter Scott tells us, were at the windows waving their white kerchiefs. One can visualise the streets with their tall gloomy houses and narrow closes, and the fighting men with their tartans and their bagpipes.

It was on the evening of this day that Robert Strange who was afterwards to marry Isabella Lumisden, was sent for by the Prince, and commissioned to make a copperplate for engraving the Jacobite currency notes. This plate, designed with the initials C.P. and three Prince of Wales feathers, was found long after in Loch Laggan. There it had probably been thrown in 1746 after the Culloden disaster. It is now housed in the West Highland Museum at Fort William.

Isabella Lumisden was young and ardent. She came of a people who had long been in the service of the Stuarts. On her grandmother's side she was descended from James Murray, whose father, the Marquis of Tullibardine, had rescued James the first and fifth at the time of the Gowrie conspiracy. William Lumisden, her father, had taken up arms in 1715 in the cause of the Chevalier de St. George; and beginning his adventures early, had been stoned in his cradle 'by a mad rout,' says the record, during a Covenanter rebellion; when her grandfather, afterwards Bishop of Edinburgh, had to fly from his church at Duddingstone. Isabella's mother was a Bruce of Kennet. Her cousin was the notable Katherine Bruce, daughter of Bruce of Newton and wife of Bruce of Clackmannan, who lived in the old Tower of Clackmannan and died in 1791 at the age of ninety-five. She had in her possession the helmet and two-handed sword of King Robert

Bruce, and would sometimes confer knighthood with this sword on those she considered worthy.

Andrew Lumisden, Isabella's brother, was out fighting in the forty-five, and so was her future husband, Robert Strange, afterwards the well-known engraver. He was one of the Strangs of Balcaskie who are mentioned in the Great Seal Register of 1482. Their origin was in the Orkneys.

From time to time a good deal has been written about Robert Strange. Yet apart from his fine professional achievement, nothing in his record is so poignant or so attractive as the racy letters of his wife, or so curious as the varied career of his sons. The whole family date from well before the epoch of the great French Revolution, and as some of them lived on into the nineteenth century, they bridge a gulf which seems to part two almost alien worlds, much as the Great War of 1914 parts the years which came before and after it. Fortunately both Isabella Lumisden, and one of her daughters after her, guarded and cherished many letters written at the time, and many relics of the Jacobite connection. These, like so many things belonging to the Stuarts, and goodness knows by what accident, have a mysterious aura of distinction and beauty. It would almost seem as if the chivalrous self-sacrifice of the Stuart followers had left some subtle influence round the slender objects which have come down to us.

Next to the cambric roses, in the thrill they bring with them, are the tiny rolls of thin paper on which tidings from the front line in the forty-five were sent. One tumbles them from the box in which they live, but they are so brittle that you scarcely dare to flatten them out. In minute handwriting one of these messages gives the names of fighters and asks for news of comrades; 'whose freinds (*sic*) here are Just on ye Rack but otherways perfectly well.' The name of Rob Strang (or as his family called him, Robert Strange) is included. 'As to Intelegence,' it continues, 'wee have no more than 4 Regimts is Just aRived in ye firth makg 2000 Men. Some they goe north others they join ye hessians.' This, the biggest despatch, is a little larger than six postage stamps.

A second message is written after reverse. 'All Solid Comfort is to be drawn from Religion only,' says the writer soberly, and at the end he finishes pathetically, 'may God Almighty bless & Guard you all & above all Preserve the Prince give ye bearer ye price of a pair of Shoes The bearer of your last is perfectly wel & I hope will see you soon my Dear I beg youl Give Jo Esplin

half a Guinea & youl Oblidge me.' There is a tiny plan of the Battle of Falkirk (Jan. 16, 1746) beautifully drawn. The disposition of the regiments is shown in small coloured squares. There is a wee despatch only a trifle larger than two postage stamps but perfectly legible, which runs: 'Beside what was at Last Battle there is to Join & March on Wednesday Ld Semple's Regimt of foot about 350 & the Scots Fuzeliers about 400 & 2 Regemts of Dragoons vizt. as Reported to be Lord Mark Ker's & St Georges there is lickewise 16 Prs of Bras—Cannon Vizt 12 of 3 Pounders & 4 of 2 Pounders—& about 40 Guners &ca. Its Reported there Artillary is to be placed behind ye first Line & al possible means are to be taken to Stop Intelegence goeing or Come from you.'

The last of these scrolls is undoubtedly in the small clear handwriting of Andrew Lumisden, Isabella's brother. '... I expect soon to tell you in person how much I am. Your all friends here, so far as I know are well.—19 March 1746.'

These despatches have been exhibited, but always rolled, so that their contents were not visible. The reason is that originally they were rolled in quills and hidden in spur holes, in the curls of wigs, and, says a record, in the tall head-dresses worn by ladies on great occasions. So that it is arresting to find amongst these papers of the forty-five an exquisite little drawing, perhaps done by Robert Strange, of a huge head-dress with elaborate ornamentations. There is a carefully outlined rosette or flower surrounded by three feathers (perhaps the three feathers of the bank-notes) placed slightly awry. It may easily have been the key to a hiding-place of some soul-stirring piece of information. It is practically the only drawing kept amongst the letters.

Alas for the followers of the Prince! After Culloden all were dispersed and in hiding. Robert Strange at first took refuge in the highlands, then he ventured back to Edinburgh, was pursued by English soldiers, and, it is said, and the story is given in Dennistoun's memoirs, that he was saved by Isabella Lumisden. The tale runs that the girl was sitting at her needlework, dressed in a gown with the great hoops of the period. Up the staircase ran a distracted fugitive imploring to be hidden. Quick as lightning she had sheltered him beneath her great hoops, and when the soldiers entered she was found placidly singing and sewing. And after a fruitless inspection of the premises the soldiers departed puzzled and unsuccessful. Whether this be true or not, it is



certainly exactly the rash, funny, successful thing that Isabella would have done.

In the outcome, it was Andrew Lumisden, brother to Isabella, who was attainted, and had to fly the country. Robert Strange came back to Edinburgh and in 1747 he and Isabella were married, it is said, without the approval of her father. Robert who was a skilful draughtsman had, though once intended for the law, already planned to become an engraver. Now after ten months of his marriage he decided to join the Jacobite colony in Rouen, and there continue his studies in drawing. From thence in 1749 he migrated to Paris, but in the following year he returned without let or hindrance to London, where he and Isabella settled, first in Parliament Street, and in 1754 in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

But Andrew Lumisden continued to follow the fortunes of the Stuarts. When he fought at Culloden he had been appointed Secretary to the Prince and had been given the custody of the Great Seal. For some time after the rout he wandered about in disguise, entering at last into Edinburgh as the 'liveried groom of a lady who rode behind him on a pad saddle,' with his yellow locks replaced by a black wig, and his eyebrows corked to match.

Finally he actually reached London with a King's Messenger who was returning there from the treason trials still in progress; Lumisden disguised as a poor teacher in rusty black clothes and a bushy periwig. At last, we may imagine with what relief to his family, he embarked at the Tower Stairs for Rouen. It was at the end of the year 1749, and he carried the Great Seal with him. Two years later Lumisden was appointed Secretary to the Chevalier de St. George. He remained in his service for sixteen years. When the Chevalier died he continued for three years with Charles Edward. It was during all this period that Lumisden kept copies of his correspondence. The voluminous 'Lumisden Letter Books' have been overhauled by writers on the period, and were certainly used by Dennistoun in his *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange* and of Andrew Lumisden, published in 1855. But Lumisden seems, with all his good points of honour and fidelity, to have had very little sense of humour. In this he greatly differed from his sister. Sometimes he makes quaint remarks, as when writing from Venice to a Mr. Duff, he says: 'Tortured with heat and flies, I shall only add my compliments to Miss Brown.' But they are few.

It is true that he was at first living a hazardous life, and very

short of money. The shadowy court with which he had thrown in his lot could only pay the merest pittance, and at that time it was difficult to send remittances from home. Later, from the slender resources of Parliament Street he was apparently forwarded books, money and clothes. Of a gift of brown cloth he says that it made 'the genteelest suit I ever had. It's lined with a silk of the same colour, well mounted with gold buttons, and a green silk waistcoat richly laced.' He begs his sister to send to Mr. Edgar, another Jacobite gentleman, a gift of Pig-tail tobacco and a cheese.

The early letters were written in sympathetic ink and all the exiles had their pseudonyms. The Chevalier de St. George was 'Our Cousin,' the Prince was 'the Principal Partner' of the 'Trade' or 'Business' by which name the Jacobite cause was spoken of. But as time went on and the position became more hopeless these subterfuges were abandoned. To these loyal minds the deterioration of Charles Edward was the saddest factor in their situation. Already in 1760 Andrew had written to Lord Blantyre: 'My Cousin has nothing so much at heart as our Friends real advantage, and does all he can to rouse him from his indolence.' I think Andrew must have always felt that he would have to leave the service of the Prince. At last in 1769 the break came. Andrew does not mention the cause, but gossip reported that he, with Sir John Hay and Mr. Urquhart, refused to go with Charles Edward to an 'Oratorio' because he was drunk. The Prince in a passion of anger dismissed them all three on the spot.

Lumisden was bitterly hurt, but he was also heartily tired of the life. He had a farewell interview with Prince Henry the Cardinal of York, brother to Prince Charles Edward, who, Lumisden writes, 'presented me with a snuff-box which had belonged to the late King, which he was graciously pleased to call a small token of his grateful remembrance.' Lumisden then set out for Paris via Avignon, Nismes and Montpellier. After having furnished his small apartment he found himself almost penniless. There is a fine Tassie medallion in black and white of Andrew, showing a handsome profile and carefully curled and tied hair. He was particular about his appearance. His sister possibly thought him extravagant, for when she sent her elder son to his care she stipulated for plainness in what he bought him, 'Particularly I will allow no ruffels for some time to come,' she writes, 'neither silk or lace.'

At this date Isabella refused to come over and visit him though he sent urgent letters to his 'dear Bell.' During all these years of absence she had been invaluable in managing the administration of his Scottish property and he had been obviously counting on her support and affection. She writes: 'I am too arquant a cub for that disapated worthless people . . . besides I can speak nothing but plain truth, broad scotch, and common sense. Such bairns as me makes the best figure at home.' However, she promised to come later, and did so in 1772. Meanwhile appeals were made by friends of Lumisden at home, for his Majesty's clemency and on the grounds that during the forty-five 'there was not any circumstance in his conduct particularly offensive' it was begged that he might be allowed to come back to London. In May, 1773, Isabella having returned home writes: 'I have not yet heard of your letter of liberty. Col. Masterton says it is at Lord North's office. But I say we must have better security than that.' The letter came, and Andrew returned to England in June. But he did not get his full pardon for seven years later. By this he was entitled to inherit money. He could not have done so without it, as by law he was held to be dead. The snuff-box, the last remnant of his faithful service, now lies on the table before me.

By 1769 Robert and Isabella had a family of three sons and two daughters, and Robert had made his reputation as an engraver. In addition to his renown he had acquired through Lumisden, who had considerable taste, many Italian pictures and prints. Strange thus became known as a collector, and used to have periodical sales at Christie's who still have the lists of the pictures disposed of. Possibly he also sold pictures privately, for Isabella with a good horse-sense in matters of art, tells her brother, 'I can sell nothing but what is really fine. Bad and middling things in the way of *Virto* I am for burning.'

The Jacobite household was no longer struggling, though they had their domestic difficulties. Isabella writes of a maid who arrived, found the house not to her liking, and 'trotted off again, Curse them all.' 'I am growing both ritch and fat,' Isabella says in what are perilously like love-letters to a cousin and friend. 'Good and bonny you know I always was.' The recipient of the letter was distressed. 'Not too fat,' he pleads, 'as if you do you'll not be so bonny, at least to my taste'; and she returns, 'I believe providence intends to keep me always the size you

approve of'; and because he had spoken of a Greenland night three months long, she cries, 'Oh! the Greenland night you speak of runs for ever in my head, that would be a night . . . But oh! it's like to be a Greenland night and day before I get an armful of joy.'

When Andrew Lumisden came to Paris, Isabella decided to send over to his care her eldest son who was now eighteen, and destined for the East India Company. The boy was called James Charles Stuart, and had for godfather the Chevalier de St. George. James began his adventures as a very small boy, for he was stolen and almost miraculously discovered by a friend of the family as he was crossing London Bridge, actually being carried off in a basket slung over a man's back. His beautiful curls had been cut, but otherwise he was none the worse; and it is characteristic of the times that very little seems to have been done about it. 'His temper is easy and naturally amiable,' wrote Isabella to her brother, 'which is very dangerous (*sic*), as he is as easily persuaded to do wrong as right.' But she was over-anxious, for James had an honourable career. 'A pretty sweet boy,' wrote Lumisden to James Murray, 'and consumes a good deal of my time, but I do not grudge it.'

James Strange, as planned, went into the Company's service, and in 1786 partly equipped a trading expedition to Vancouver where he named the water between the island and Vancouver, 'Queen Charlotte Sound,' a name it keeps to this day.

The second boy, Thomas Andrew, at first called Andrew, but afterwards Thomas, was educated at Westminster School, and a family story tells how he carved his name on the coronation chair in Edward the Confessor's chapel (a chair which had been designed for Queen Mary of Orange) and that the writing is there still. In the Westminster play of 1775 he acted Medea in the *Adelphi of Terence*.

He was called to the Bar, and in 1789 was appointed Chief Justice of Halifax, Nova Scotia. There is a newspaper of three years later which gives an account of his retirement. Perhaps the advertisements in the paper are more interesting than the news. One wonders what were the 'Sixty-four Hum Hums' for ladies' dresses which are included in the 'Fashionable Merchandise,' and one longs to see the 'satin sprigged terrindams' whatever they were, and the 'silk gauzes' and the 'common elegant fans' which appear hardly necessary in Nova Scotia. There are, too,

lists of 'gold and silver thread spangles, fashionable bunches of feathers silvered' and a host of perishable and luxurious odds and ends. Also there is a pathetic little advertisement, with three guineas reward, for a runaway negro, 'a remarkable smooth-faced fellow . . . wearing white flannel trowsers and a round hat.'

In 1796 Thomas Strange went out to Madras as Recorder, and in 1805 was appointed Chief Justice and knighted.

I believe it is owing to the effect of the climate on the temper of Thomas that Indian judges do not now wear wigs. It was said in his family, that overcome by heat and the discomfort of the horse-hair head-dress he tore off his wig and threw it into the court, saying, as his mother might have done 'This wig be d—d,' and that thereafter judges in India were dispensed from wearing wigs.

During all these developments Isabella had been staunch to the Jacobite cause. Even when her brother was dismissed she had written of Charles Edward, 'Oh! he had much to distract his brains. . . . No. My hopes can never be destroyed. Despair is the doom of Devils.' Yet in the year 1787 something did occur which undeniably made her politics a little inconsistent. The reputation of her husband as an engraver had long been secure, and as far back as 1760 Horace Walpole in giving him an introduction to Sir Horace Mann at Florence had said of Strange, 'he is a very first-rate artist and by far our best.' His work had a great vogue in France and writing to his son Thomas in 1682 Robert Strange says of the engraving he had just finished from Vandyk's picture of Henrietta Maria, 'The fame of Henrietta is now the conversation of Paris and the public seem eager to receive her.' His Jacobite principles, never so whole-hearted as those of Isabella, had considerably weakened. He goes on to say that he is sending proofs to London for presentation to the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales and the two Princesses.

Three years later he engraved a picture by West of the apotheosis of the two infant Princes who had died. Then George III sent for Robert Strange and after having 'said many flattering things,' Isabella tells her son in India, he requested Robert to follow him to St. James's and there knighted him.

I think the newspapers must have considered this an event of public interest, for the old Jacobite was bitterly attacked. The *Morning Post* said: 'Sir Something Strange ought to scratch down the year 1787 in his best style. But what must he do to



commemorate 1745? Perhaps he will etch the battle of Culloden and show the corps he served in with plaids and bonnets flying from the English troops'; and so on. Isabella seems to have made no comment, public or private, on these attacks. But in the next year she justified her position in dashing style. She wrote to the 'Conductor of the World' (i.e., the Editor of the newspaper) objecting amongst other things that the title of Pretender had been given to Charles Edward. Her communication ends, 'Let them that knows little of history know likewise that the present family on the Thron did not Rob the Crown from the Brow of the Stuart family. No; it was the Voice of the People that called them there.'

Indeed, Isabella was always up in arms at the term Pretender. It was said that when she was quite old she sat listening in silence to a conversation in which it was used, and then startled the company by bursting out, 'You and your Pretender be d——d.' Yet for all her vehemence she was adored by her children. Once when accused of spoiling them she had written to her brother Andrew, 'My children loves me but fears me as sinners fear death.' This does not appear in the correspondence. A severe word is rare and the hardest criticism I find is when writing of her son Robert she says, 'He has a good heart. Our heads we do not make for ourselves.'

Though her spelling was odd and it is obvious that she spoke Scotch, Isabella had a fine natural style in writing. She admired Dr. Johnson, but she is amazed at the success of James Boswell's *Life*. 'Mr. Boswell told me he had in a week or two sold 800 copies of the life of Johnson at £2 2s. Well done if it is true. Nothing like writing a book if it is published in time.' Though she knew the Burneys intimately I can find no mention of the famous Diary by Fanny, and she rarely speaks of the exciting occurrences of the day. She was a great friend of the well-known Eliza Draper, and seems to have an idea that her letters were well written as they are all cherished. Sermons have no charm for her. 'I have not got them,' she writes of some that were recommended to her. 'I am in no hurry. I think I could write a sermon myself.'

Life had in some ways been hard on her. Though she had gradually grown more prosperous, romance had vanished and she had been left to fight many of her battles without help. Perhaps not always regretted, for she had written long ago to her brother,



'Tis true I have had severe additional fatigue since Robie went abroad but I have had one substantial comfort. I have been my own mistress. I have had no chiding stuff which I believe I have sometimes brought on my self. But when I did it was in defence of some saving truth.'

Neither of the Strange daughters married, and both seem to have had sad love-affairs which came to an end either from want of money or from death. The younger, Isabella Katherine, lived until she was ninety and told tales of her escape from the great 1792 Revolution in France. The other, Mary Bruce, died young. A daughter of her brother Thomas had a curious story. When she was a girl travelling with her family at Montreuil she saw some writing cut on the window of their *salon*. Though told it was extremely vulgar to read what was written she continued to do so. To her astonishment she deciphered the name of her aunt, Mary Bruce; written before the Revolution.

There is one charming pastel of Isabella Strange showing her with an oval intelligent face, and large laughing dark eyes. She is holding in her hand a white rose, the badge of the Jacobites.

## HARK BACK!

BY WILFRID JELF.

*THE* shades lengthen. Alas! The day's work is done: and the evening of life which has fallen prematurely has been devoted to a search in the flames of the smoking-room fire for a few outstanding moments of thirty-three years' service in the profession of arms. To record these is an act of temerity and requires justification.

But no such justification exists: not even a claim to infallibility. Nevertheless, some outstanding hours of personal experience have been recaptured by frail memory without written record of any sort, though special care has been taken to place each incident accurately in its own setting. Thus it is hoped to reproduce the general colours and perspectives in which certain happenings presented themselves to the writer, in some cases over thirty years ago. Some names of individuals and units have been disguised.

*Hark back, then!*

### I. THE AMBUSH.

Martyr's Mounted Infantry were holding a post on the top of Boesman's Kop and the officer in command had been staring through his field-glasses since the earliest glimmerings of the new day. He was mightily puzzled.

It was a most extraordinary thing, yet no one seemed to be noticing it. That long thin trail of buck-waggon six miles away hurrying from shell-fire over the open veldt towards him was apparently burying its head like a snake in a hole near some farm buildings on the bank of a small spruit. The mounted troops following the convoy had clearly not observed the phenomenon. To the man with the bird's-eye view of the whole proceedings from the top of the kopje towards which the column was moving the whole thing was unaccountable, even allowing for the fact that the dense dust down below must be making observation of the head of the convoy a matter of considerable difficulty for those behind.

The force was tired out. That was painfully obvious: and further, it was beating a hazardous retreat. It had originally gone out on what the soldiery was pleased to call a 'bill-sticking' expedition. Enlightened politicians, thousands of miles away across blue salt water, had discovered the panacea for all further hostilities. Henceforth the hard nut of enemy tenacity was to be prised open by cajolery, not cracked by force. A Cavalry Brigade under Brigadier-General Broadwood had accordingly been despatched from Bloemfontein into the outlying districts of Thaba'nchu equipped with proclamations, notices and posters of every size and hue, in which were enumerated the manifold advantages to be derived by the belligerent farmer from the surrender of his arms (and incidentally his country!) and a speedy return to his farm.

But the manifold advantages hadn't appealed to him, and in a short time the bill-sticking process had developed into a running fight with dangerous possibilities. Broadwood's column had in fact been driven into rearguard actions for its own protection by a hitherto-unknown Boer leader called Christian de Wet and the Ninth Division had been hastily ordered out from Bloemfontein to meet it as early as possible in the neighbourhood of Boesman's and shepherd it in.

Now these two columns were still a day's march apart, and after a short night of extreme discomfort under the enemy's sniping fire from the Eastern bank of the Modder River (which Broadwood's troops had crossed in the dark) the retirement was resumed at crack of dawn towards the relieving Division with which it was hoped to effect junction about midday. But in the very earliest hours of morning the transport convoy had barely got under way when demoralising shell-fire from the rear drove the fighting troops out of bivouac, thereby causing considerable confusion in the general withdrawal as a result of which the usual protective measures for an advanced guard went by the board. The Modder River lay immediately behind them and the Koorn Spruit, a tributary of that river, in front. Glimmerings of daylight were at last beginning to outline the hills beyond, about which it was hoped to join hands; and with the first rays of the rising sun the heliograph on Boesman's was seen to be winking its reassuring message of welcome to the worn-out men trekking towards it across the plain below. They shouldn't be long now, but the rearguard could be heard heavily engaged at the river crossings behind them and the

situation was clearly becoming more precarious, calling for earliest possible relief.

But no help could yet be forthcoming. Mounted messengers bringing despatches from Broadwood in which the gravity of his position was described had arrived at the M.I. post on Boesman's in the small hours and pushed on towards Bloemfontein, meeting the Ninth Division at Springfield still a long way from the scene of operations. In view of the urgency Colonel Flint's Brigade Division of Field Artillery had immediately been sent on ahead to the sound of the guns, leaving the rest of the Division to follow as quickly as possible.

Down there in the plain the head of the convoy was still diving into the dip under the lash of the native drivers who plied their long whips with the skill that is theirs alone and flicked that square inch on the neck of the offender in the twelve-span team of oxen with the dexterity of the fly-fisherman. The mule waggons followed. Here and there a Cape cart would leave the line of march and gallop ahead under its light load with the object of escape from the pressure in rear and an earlier arrival at its destination.

The convoy was followed closely by such guns as were not employed in the immediate fighting but which were due to come into action on crossing the Koorn Spruit and in their turn cover the next withdrawal of the rearguard. The little twelve-pounders with their eight horses in team caught the sun's rays gaily enough with the varnish of light khaki paint on merrily revolving spokes. Gun detachments walked beside their horses whose heads swung wearily from side to side as they paddled along in the dust. Nosebags on flanks hung limply, for the forage had been drastically cut off late, and dust lay over all—on men's faces, horses' muzzles, and equipment. Water! That at the moment was the crying need for all. Water!

Nevertheless, as the detachments plodded on, the usual light talk passed from man to man and the British soldier's age-old tradition for good cheer in adversity never wavered, though the professional optimist himself might well have been hovering on the brink of tears!

On looking back to sudden great disasters, especially those arising at a moment of mental apathy and physical exhaustion, no two men will have the same tale to tell. It is certain that on the present occasion all those involved were in a normal state of march complex with no faculty particularly alight and certainly

no sense of anticipation. Those that live to tell the story speak more of the sensation of harassing pressure from the enemy behind than of a thought for what might lie in front. But a gradual realisation manifested itself in due course for all that, and as the men approached the cutting leading down into the drift it began to dawn on more than one that all was not well in front. The long trail of buck-waggon was not emerging as it should have been doing on the opposite side and somewhere between the two banks a mile of convoy had disappeared.

What did Sergeant think about it?

Now Sergeant was an Englishman. In his philosophy of life the commonplaces constituted the only possible truth. Imagination, romance, the uncanny, were all for fairy books—freaks, unreal, unwholesome!

'Stopped to water in the river of course, silly!' was his only comment.

But it didn't ring true and no one knew better than Sergeant. They were prepared to accept anything within reason from him, for they had a sublime trust in his wisdom, but really! this wouldn't fit in at all. Waggon would have been laagered up for water, beasts taken out and led down to drink. Besides, this was no time to stop for water. Sergeant must think of something better. Fact remained: somewhere in the middle of the open veldt a mile of convoy had disappeared. You couldn't get away from it.

The next hundred yards were covered in silence while the matter was being turned over in eight heads. As they reached the cutting where the track had worn its way through the bank and dropped abruptly down to the drift they caught a fleeting glimpse of the tail of the last vehicle below disappearing sharply to the right along the bed of the spruit which was nearly dry. The road leading up the opposite bank was empty.

And then they looked up. The top of the cutting to right and to left of them was lined with riflemen silently watching them passing by—men lying like bogies in a nightmare just over their heads, close up and glaring down at them.

'By God, Sergeant, we're trapped!' somebody whispered.

It was all up now. From here to the bottom of the cutting rifle barrels at the present! The thing was incredible. One by one the waggon had walked into the trap: one by one had dipped down into the bed of the spruit. Here they had been alternately diverted up or down its dry channel, driven by panic-stricken

Kaffirs at the revolver points of reckless men. Not a moment's delay anywhere! No warnings for those coming behind on pain of death.

The situation stood revealed in its astonishing success. It was up to someone to do something desperate now, something to draw attention to this sickening trap. No more victims could be allowed to fall to this subtle stroke of genius. One rifle-shot provoked might be enough: two would be better: three or four would make a certainty.

And the Unknown took it upon himself. To get at his revolver unnoticed was out of the question and he must act quickly . . . before they reached the bottom. A glance at his comrades for inspiration . . . old '14's' head was in the way . . . very well, then, for better, for worse . . . NOW!

Without warning he hurled himself at two rifles at once and struck out fiercely at the two bearded faces behind. As he struck, both barrels rang out into the air: and this set hell-fire loose in front and behind, below and on the top, at half-past five in the morning while the rearguard action blazed into battle proper.

The ambush was exposed.

Flint's guns arrived at the foot of Boesman's soon after eleven, only in time to see the battle fade and die away. Fourteen of London's most faithful servants, gallant omnibus horses, lay dead in our tracks from exhaustion. The Highland Brigade at the head of the Division followed many miles behind and the Divisional Commander had climbed far up the side of the kopje above us to contemplate the position.

As we dismounted and looked round teams, word passed quickly that Broadwood's lost guns and transport still lay down in the bed of the drift before us six miles away. Ours was to be the honour of helping to recover them. Down the column of batteries passed the welcome preliminary caution for battle, 'Prepare for action!' Off came muzzle and breech covers: bores, breech blocks, and ammunition limbers were hastily inspected: drivers looked to horses' feet, collars, and points of harness. In three minutes Flint's eighteen guns were standing to, ready to do or die. Nothing remained but the order to go.

But no orders came. From where we stood drawn up in line of battery columns we looked down the long glacis before us



stretching into the plain below. The country lay spread out in perfect panorama. Six miles away, where the few buildings of Pretorius's farm marked the Koorn Spruit drift, fitful bursts of shrapnel were still making their pattern of neat white cloud. On the face of the open veldt beyond stood the building of the Waterworks by Sanna's Post and the station sheds which had served as a rallying-point for Broadwood's gallant Horse Artillery in the later phases of the battle. Beyond all these again ran the clear-cut outline of the Modder River cutting boldly across the plain at the foot of the hills from which the Boer attack at daybreak had originated. But Peace lay over the whole scene now and not a figure could be seen moving anywhere.

Flint scanned the proposition that lay before him with the satisfaction of the seasoned warrior.

'It's a gift!' he said: 'we shall have those guns back here before night. But we must be getting on.'

Still no orders came. The Divisional Commander had taken refuge on the hill-top like Moses on Mount Carmel and refused counsel from those who pressed for instant action. The god of battles had stricken his judgment with paralysis and befogged his brain with the hesitation of alternatives. The stars in their courses were fighting for De Wet.

Down in the bed of the spruit—chaos indescribable! The master mind of Christian De Wet was grappling with difficulties of inextricable confusion among crippled gun-teams, broken vehicles, dead and wounded men and animals, panic-stricken native drivers, and above all the incredible stupidity of his own burghers in devising ways and means for the instant removal of his valuable prize. Now and again from where he stood directing the putting together of every available beast of draught he turned his telescope on to the lower slopes of Boesman's and anxiously scanned the ever-growing force of horse and foot there assembling. It was touch and go now without a doubt and he feared for the loss of his hard-won spoils should he fail to clear before that avalanche started rolling down upon him.

But the avalanche remained frozen and within two hours his improvised menagerie was patched up to some condition of possible movement until a polyglot procession struggled out from the drift in a cloud of trailing dust, eastwards over the open veldt for all the world to see, finally to disappear in triumph into the fold of the Modder River and the sheltering hill country beyond. And

the Ninth Division stood rooted to the high ground in the west watching them go.

In the drift remained wreckage. Above the trickle of water where the track started to climb the bank for Bloemfontein were a gunner and a horse. Both were too far gone, it seemed, for anyone to have bothered about. The Unknown was lying at his horse's feet, the latter blowing heavily and bleeding from two wounds: but he dropped his nose to his master's hand as the latter felt blindly for it in the soft mists of final parting.

'Good-bye, Charlie, I'm off, old pal . . . don't sound too grand yourself neither, blowing fit to bust. . . .'

The old horse put his muzzle to the gunner's cheek.

'Charlie, I'm goin' now. When I'm gorn, you 'op it! We mustn't be cop'd alive . . . not us! . . . So long!'

Two minutes later the horse was stumbling on towards Boesman's. Nobody seemed to mind. He was making such heavy weather, he really wasn't worth a bullet.

Bennett Burleigh, war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, shut up his glasses with a snap and started down Boesman's. He had seen quite enough for one morning. At the foot of the kopje he found the whole Division assembled, the infantry with arms piled, waiting. What in Heaven's name were they waiting for anyway? Surely they knew there was a nasty mess out there near those farm buildings to be cleaned up without a second's delay!

But he found himself sourly received by groups of disgruntled and infuriated officers. What did he suppose we had been racing up in the dust and heat for except to help Broadwood in? Wasn't it perfectly obvious to the meanest intelligence that someone had got cold feet and wouldn't let us go? What had he, the war correspondent, seen from the top of the kopje anyhow?

'Well,' he answered grimly, 'it looked to me as if the whole of the transport and some of its escort including some guns got caught in a trap in the Koorn Spruit this side of Sanna's Post on their way over to us. It's a sure thing that a lot of them went down into the drift and never a one came out again. But there was some gutty fighting at point-blank range by the Horse Artillery above the drift, I can tell you. Thanks to the guns the rest of the column got out of the mess. But I'll tell you what! That fox down in the drift wants bolting now and we shall be too late if we go on coffee-housing here like this.'

We looked across the plain and swore hard things about the—well, we swore hard things, for, as we looked, a trail of dust was beginning to rise beyond the drift and a long procession could be seen laboriously winding its way eastwards past the Waterworks and Sanna's Post towards the crossings of the Modder River. De Wet was being allowed to get away with it. In the near foreground all was sublimely quiet with never a sign of movement but for one small object, distorted by the mirage, tacking very slowly over the open veldt towards us.

'It's a man on a horse: we shall hear some news at last!' said the very junior subaltern as he pulled out his glasses. 'No, it's not, by Jove! It's a horse without a man and he's coming straight for us, at least as straight as he can, poor devil, for he's looking mighty sick.'

It was a horse all right. It took him a long time to reach us, and he came rolling in like a windjammer making port in a full gale.

'Wish he could tell us what's happened out there!' said the very junior officer again. He hadn't left school long.

We stopped the horse as he came up to us and looked at his feet for identification.

'14. U. RHA,' read the Senior Subaltern. 'I was afraid so.'

He let go the rein and the old troop horse hobbled bravely on past the group of chafing officers to his objective, the leading line of gun-teams of the Brigade Division. There he halted at last and reported for duty. Kindly men gathered round him and led him gently away to the rear for the ministrations of the Farrier Sergeant. Ten minutes later the Veterinary Officer walked up to the front.

'Sorry, Major,' he said to the Battery Commander: 'but I'm afraid we shall have to put the old boy to sleep. Two gaping wounds and he's lost a lot of blood. He must have been a rare good 'un too. Not many could have stuck it out like that. But he's old and—well, he'd better go. There's little we can do for him on the line of march. Shall I carry on?'

'Yes, I suppose so. Carry on,' came the answer.

But there was no need, for when they got back to him old '14' had heard his boot-and-saddle sounded and carried on by himself to join his lord and master.

Later in the day, too late indeed to be of use, orders were at last vouchsafed for an advance in a new and north-easterly direction:

but order and counter-order reduced the manoeuvre to futile stagnation and night fell mercifully on a day of mismanagement and disappointment unequalled in our records.

That night the Battery Sergeants were gathered round the camp fire and the Farrier Sergeant was bending lovingly over his mug of rum-and-coffee.

'Reck'n I never saw a better kept set of appointments on a 'orse!' he was saying: 'never! Good enough for the opening of Parliament and just the thing for the Farrier Sergeant!'

A hardy race Farrier Sergeants.

### SEPTEMBER EVENING.

O EVENING blest, when over the wide fields  
The splendour of the slanting sun is poured,  
Confident as a careless emperor,  
In warm benigance, when the flocks of gulls  
Are earth-drawn in battalions keeping watch  
Upon the glistening stubble; solemn the trees  
Are breathing graciousness, and mistily  
The roaming hills are merged within the sky,  
Blues into grays and grays again to hues  
Too softly iridescent to be stayed  
By aught less strong than a lover's memory.  
So Silence comes; the lines of pearl and gold  
Fade slowly in the vasty arch of Heaven,  
The shadows that have been advancing friends  
From tree to further hedgerow cast their length  
Into the robes of Night: the bat's a-wing,  
The field-mouse dares to nibble at the ear  
Down-broken in the stook that darkly stands  
Awaiting still the morrow's harvester,  
The owl takes up her melancholy plaint—  
And Man, reprieved a little thread of time  
From all the strident science that invades  
Day's ancient monarchy, is once again  
An infant sleeping in the arms of God.

GORELL.

## THE THIRTEENTH PRISONER:

A TRUE STORY; TOLD BY RAYMOND JOHNES.

I WAS just seventeen, a Cadet who but for the revolution of 1917 would have been on the Eastern Front within a year. Nothing had changed much in the life at the Cadet Corps which we had known since we were ten years old. The Revolution had not affected our routine; our scarlet shoulder-straps still bore the Imperial Crown and cipher. We knew that our country was in danger from within as well as from the enemy. We were prepared to carry out any orders, but politics and planning were beyond us. Had our chiefs planned and acted more effectually, the history of Europe would have been very different.

It was two days after the Bolshevik *coup d'état* that my friend Petroff found me in the tuck-shop outside the wall of the Cadet Corps grounds. The retired sergeant-major who kept it sat airing his beard over a brazier, while some half-dozen of the younger cadets were laughing over some private joke.

Petroff, who was still a student at the Lyceum, was in the uniform of a private soldier with the badges of a nine-months' service Volunteer. He looked round the tuck-shop.

'Sasha, come for a walk with me,' he said, 'I want to talk to you.'

There was an air of mystery and importance about him. I crammed the rest of my bun into my mouth and we walked over towards the tennis-courts.

'Of course you know what has happened, Sasha,' said he.

'You mean the Bolsheviks?'

He nodded.

'Well, this business has gone too far. We are going to try to stop it. Colonels Kuropatkin and Polkovnikov are going to seize the city to-morrow with the Officers' Schools and whatever loyal men they can lay their hands on. Will you come? We are getting lots of the older cadets.'

My father and my ancestors for two hundred years had been officers of the Emperor, as I was destined to be; there could be no doubt about my answer.

'Well, I'll call for you to-morrow about eight. Meet me by the tuckshop. Not a word to anyone.'

It was a long time before I got to sleep that night. I was to fight for Russia and the Emperor to-morrow.

No signs of activity were to be seen outside the Michael School when we arrived on the following evening. Petroff gave a counter-sign to the sentry: we walked through the gates and through a courtyard to one of the lecture-rooms; a number of Junkers and Volunteers were being issued with revolvers. I recognised several cadets of my school.

Petroff and I with a dozen others, under the orders of a senior Junker, were detailed to hold a street crossing about half a mile from the School and stop all Bolshevik cars.

We were lucky. The first car, braking suddenly, skidded to a halt on the slimy cobblestones.

'What is it, *Tovarisch*?' said the driver in an injured tone, 'we're in a hurry to get to Smolny. . . .'

'Papers,' said the Junker briefly. The sight of our revolvers did not encourage conversation.

It was a Bolshevik car. Two of our party were installed in the back seat, with orders to drive to the Michael School. Before they had disappeared from view we had an opportunity of repeating the hold-up.

Petroff, who went as escort to the second car, turned round and waved to me as he drove off. I was not to see him again until the next year in Archangel—but that is another story.

With the third or fourth car, I returned to the Michael School.

The officers and Junkers were bustling to and fro with a new light in their eyes; they were laughing and joking. Something was being done at last; the humiliation and uncertainty of the Kerensky régime was coming to an end.

It was late by now and I went to the class-rooms where we stood in readiness for the next move. My companions knew as little as I did of the plans. We gathered, vaguely, that our chiefs intended first to seize the Post Office, power stations and important strategic points before converging on the Smolny Institute where the Bolsheviks had established their Headquarters.

The excitement had tired me; I dozed off on a bench near the door. It must have been three o'clock in the morning when a Junker summoned me to the office. It was brightly lit and full of officers, coming and going. By the far wall a little knot of senior officers were having an animated discussion in front of a



plan of Petrograd. The Junker conducted me to a table where a subaltern was busy writing; he looked up as we reported.

'Ah, here we are! Do you know your way to the Pavlovskoye Infantry School, my lad?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And the Vladimir Infantry School?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, I want you to take these messages to the schools. Look sharp! I may tell you that the orders you are carrying are very important.'

With the precious papers under my greatcoat, I walked briskly out into the night. The streets were ill lit and almost deserted. A chilly drizzle was falling.

I was half-way across the Marsovo Polye—an enormous square over half a mile wide—when I remembered that I had left my revolver at the Michael School. Unused though I was to carrying arms, the realisation of my defencelessness made me feel lonely.

It took me a good hour to reach the Pavlovskoye School, which was on the Vassilievsky Ostrov (island) near my own Corps.

As I approached the building, I heard for the first time in my life the rat-tat-tat of a machine gun. It must have been very near. I broke into a run and, huddled in the shadow of the gate, rang the bell violently.

The postern opened and a lantern and a revolver were poked into my face.

'Come in quickly,' said a voice.

As the door closed behind me an officer emerged from the guard-room. I saluted and handed him my letter.

He read it; when he had finished, he shrugged his shoulders.

'Too late! Much too late . . . you look tired, my lad. Come into the guard-room and have some tea.'

I told him that I had another message to deliver at the Vladimir School.

'You won't get there; the Bolsheviks are attacking it now. Didn't you hear the machine guns? Anyhow, have a cup of tea quickly before you go.'

A samovar was steaming on the table in the guard-room. With the help of the tea, I fought off my drowsiness; as I was about to go, the officer called me back.

'You had better put that letter in your boot,' said he. 'Try to get in by the back of the Vladimir School if you like. It's your only chance.'

I waited for a couple of minutes in the gateway, tired, shivering and bewildered.

Silence. I could not stay there until morning. I started off; but as I reached the corner, I was challenged.

Two Red Guards were aiming at me, not twenty yards away. I put up my hands. In a few moments I was in the guard-room of a barracks occupied by the Bolsheviks.

The air was unbearably stuffy. My escort handed me over to a sergeant, who asked me what I was doing out at that hour of the morning.

I explained that we had been told at the Cadet Schools to disperse to our homes. I was on my way home, when I heard the machine gun. I had stepped into the gate of the Infantry School to take shelter.

All this time I could fancy that I heard the letter in my boot crackling loudly. But my explanation seemed to suffice.

'You must wait until the Tovarish Kommissar comes at eight,' said the sergeant; 'but sit down and have some tea. Perhaps Your Nobility is hungry?'

My Nobility was indeed; but the polite form of address only increased my nervousness. I was glad to eat the sour black bread and drink the infamous tea. The incriminating letter in my boot gave me no peace. I asked to go to the lavatory where I got rid of it and returned to the guard-room in a much more confident frame of mind. The dawn was breaking. In spite of the stench of the guard-room, the hardness of the benches and the snoring all round me, I managed to get a nap.

At eight o'clock I was summoned to the Kommissar's office, where I repeated my story. The official, seated behind a table, looked at me very hard, but seemed satisfied.

'Is that what he told you?' he asked the sergeant.

'Yes, Tovarish Kommissar!'

'Have you searched him? No? Do so now.'

I was made to strip and my garments were searched very thoroughly indeed. It was fortunate that I had left the revolver at the Michael School.

'You can go,' said the Kommissar, when I had satisfied the searcher, 'but let me give you a piece of advice. Stay near home. This neighbourhood is unhealthy just at present. And you had better take those epaulettes off—quite out of fashion. . . .'

I started out towards home, but with no intention of going there.

I felt that there was still plenty of work to be done and that, tired and hungry as I was, I would not shirk it. Besides, I was infuriated at being told to remove my epaulettes. I saw as I passed the Vladimir Infantry School that the Red Guards now had a field-gun trained on the Gate, and the whole quarter was covered by their machine guns. The tram I took on Kammeny Ostrov passed my mother's house, but I resisted the temptation to stop. By ten o'clock I was back at the Michael School.

The Artillerymen had not allowed themselves to be bottled up like their comrades of the Infantry School. Patrols of Junkers were commanding all the approaches. But the enthusiasm of the previous day was lacking. I reported to the officer who had sent me.

'A great pity,' he said, when he had heard my story, 'but you've done your best. You really ought to have a rest now, but we can't spare anyone. I have a message for the officer in charge of the detachment at the Winter Palace. Will you take it along now?'

Out into the drizzling rain once more, across the Marsovo Polye and past the British Embassy. I could hear occasional shots from the direction of the Winter Palace. As I arrived at the corner of the vast square I saw a rough line of barricades stretching across the front of the Alexander Column. To the left, I could make out a dark mass moving about the opening of the Admiralty Arch. Every now and then a rifle cracked from one side or the other.

I felt that it would be more prudent to approach from the rear and turned into the little lane that runs past the Ermitage Museum. Nearing the back of the Winter Palace, I met a patrol of Junkers and was conducted through the East Gate.

The courts were silent and deserted. No one but an occasional attendant, still wearing the Imperial livery. As we came out of the front gate, there was a whistle and a tinkle of broken glass; a bullet from the other side smashed a window. The shots were evidently not meant to hit anybody.

The officer in charge of the party was leaning at the back of the Alexander Column, smoking a cigarette. Lying behind the hastily constructed barricade on either side, which consisted chiefly of gilt and malachite furniture, were a few—a very few—Junkers. And once again as he read my letter, I heard the words: 'Too late!'

Towards the east a field-gun began to fire slowly. It was firing at point-blank range, for the crash of the shell followed immediately on the report of the gun. I told the officer what I had seen on the Vassilievsky Ostrov.

We stood talking, as an occasional bullet shrieked across the bleak, empty square, four times as large as Trafalgar Square. Presently we heard a confused shouting and a crowd debouched from the Admiralty Arch.

'At the windows of the General Staff Building—one round volley—Fire!'

The mob wavered, stopped. Still it must have been clear to them that we were firing over their heads. More shouting. Presently, a white flag detached itself from the dark mass and moved across the square.

It was a single, unarmed sailor, who halted about forty yards in front of our line and proceeded to make a speech.

'Gospoda!' he cried (it seemed curious to hear him call us 'gentlemen' instead of 'comrades'), 'you are Russians and we are Russians. Let us avoid the shedding of Russian blood. Your resistance is useless; the Soviets hold the city. I promise you safe conduct to the Smolny Institute if you will leave this position.'

The officer allowed him to approach; a short conversation decided our fate. The orders I had brought evidently gave him authority to surrender—on terms. We were to abandon our position and march to Smolny under arms.

The crowd had in the meantime been edging forward. It was composed of armed factory hands, soldiers and a sprinkling of sailors. The officer gave order to the Junkers to rise. And the thin, scattered line disclosed—twenty men.

A murmur of astonishment, almost of admiration, went up from the crowd. To these humble followers of Lenin, as yet imperfectly steeped in Communist doctrine, men were still men—not *bourgeois* or proletarians.

We fell in and marched off, the sailor leading with his white flag. I brought up the rear. On the way, a few of the crowd began to jeer at my black uniform greatcoat—the Junkers being in Service dress. The sailor rebuked them and thereafter marched with me in the rear of the party.

A pale October sun was shining in our eyes as we arrived at the Smolny Institute about half-past three. The old school was bristling with machine guns; there was red everywhere—red rosettes, armlets—even red ribbons on the bayonets of the sentries.

Our sailor left us in the courtyard and returned a few minutes later accompanied by an officer without epaulettes, wearing a red rosette. The latter did not look our officer in the face as he told

him to 'pile arms.' A list of our names was made and we were marched into the building.

We had put our heads into the lion's mouth. There was nothing left for us to do but to comply.

For the time being we were left in a corridor guarded at both ends by Red troops. Feeling wretchedly sleepy and hungry—I had eaten nothing since the tea and black bread at dawn—I lay down and went to sleep.

I do not know what time of the night it was when we were awakened, taken out into the courtyard and marched off in single file under a heavy escort of Red Guards. Too weary and dispirited now to care what happened, we stumbled along, half-asleep. It seemed hours later that we found ourselves crossing the Troitzky Bridge; I guessed that we were being taken to Peter-Paul.

Some others must have guessed it, too, for I heard a scuffle and some shouting in the rear of the party. I heard later that the only result of their attempt to escape was that they were thrown into the Neva by the escort.

The approach to Peter-Paul was heavily defended by a section of field artillery and machine guns echeloned in depth. We were finally ushered into a stuffy room, about fourteen by twenty feet, dimly lit by a lamp. It had been one of the barrack-rooms of the fortress. Along the far side, beneath a high, barred window, ran a wooden bench on which several civilians were sleeping; we learnt later that they were ex-ministers and government officials. There were thirty-two of us in the room altogether. We had just enough room for us all to lie down on the bench and on the floor, and were thankful for one small mercy—a wash-basin and tap in the corner of the room.

I cannot remember exactly how many days I was there; it may have been a fortnight. We were given tea and black bread in the morning; bortsch, salt herrings, bread and potatoes in the evening and at midday. From time to time, a Jewish Kommissar came into the room and read out three or four names. He was a small dark man, with a black beard and pince-nez; he wore a khaki tunic with a red rosette. There was a cold implacable hostility in the beady eyes behind the pince-nez; and he never uttered a syllable more than was absolutely necessary.

Those who were called out did not return. We never knew what became of them.

In the first few days, we were not allowed out of the room, except



singly and under escort. As the little company dwindled, we were taken out about sunset to walk round the roof of one of the bastions for a quarter of an hour each day.

The bastion lay some twenty feet below the level of the curtain wall of the fortress and was only accessible through one little door. The sentry counted us as we passed out and when he summoned us back; and for a quarter of an hour we were left to ourselves.

The short period of open-air exercise cannot have done us very much good. Out of the stuffy room into the dark chill of an autumn evening; looking out over the black waters of the Neva at the lost city, we returned to our prison more depressed than when we left it.

I had forgotten to put on my greatcoat and was feeling colder and more wretched than usual one evening, as I walked out on to the bastion, the last of the party.

The sentry touched each one as he counted us out—'nine—ten—eleven—twelve'—

A laugh was a rare thing in those days, but the wag of the party had pointed out at lunch-time that there were thirteen of us; and we had laughed.

I counted the party to make sure, as we walked briskly round—thirteen was correct. And the sentry had counted twelve.

The quarter of an hour seemed interminable: I watched the door. As it opened, I stepped back into one of the embrasures in the parapet.

I felt as if the beating of my heart would suffocate me; the sentry was counting: 'nine—ten—eleven—twelve!'

The heavy door crashed to: a key rattled. Then silence.

I crouched down and waited. I dared not move until it was quite dark. My first thought had been to scale the fortress wall. At a glance, I could see that that was impossible. As to getting the door open, I had not even a penknife.

When it was quite dark, I walked over to the point of the bastion and looked with longing at the roof of my school on the skyline of the Vassilievsky Ostrov, only five hundred yards away. Then I looked down at the swirling river, only a dozen feet below and realised with sudden exhilaration that I was a good swimmer and that the current was in my favour.

My boots—of the variety known in England as Wellingtons—were a problem. This I solved by tucking them into my belt in such a way that instead of filling with water, they would give me additional buoyancy for a few minutes. Then dressed in my trousers and white linen blouse, I dived into the river.



I rose quickly. The current carried me along swiftly and I was glad: for every minute I seemed to get colder. The river would be frozen in another fortnight. I could not have been swimming for more than twenty minutes, but I was numb and exhausted when I landed at the western end of Vassilievsky Ostrov.

I hurried up the bank and took shelter among the enormous anchors, figure-heads and naval lumber of Peter's Yard. The wind had risen at sunset and blew mercilessly on my dripping clothes. Fortunately I had the sense to wring out my blouse before I went on; this probably saved me from pneumonia.

I had almost reached the gate of the Cadet School, when I saw a sentry standing motionless. For a moment I thought he had seen me and shrank against the wall. But he turned and paced back along his beat.

I was wondering how I could get over the wall, when it occurred to me to try the postern gate by the tuck-shop. To my astonishment, it was unlocked. And I slipped back into the grounds that had been familiar to me for the last six years.

Our Director-General, 'Uncle Poop,' as we called him, would help me unless he, too, had been arrested. Noiselessly I crept round to the North Gate and up the stairway that led to his flat.

I knocked, softly at first, then louder. No sound and no light! I was about to give up in despair, when the door opened softly and I saw the General's elderly housekeeper, carrying a candle in her trembling hands.

A glow of relief spread over her face as she recognized me.

'Slavo Bogou!' she exclaimed, 'come in quickly—shshshsh!' She closed the door softly behind me. 'I'll tell His Excellency that you are here.' She ushered me into the warm silence of the library.

The Director in his dressing-gown appeared in a moment.

'... my boy!'—but you're wringing wet! Where have you been? Olga Stepanovna! bring towels at once. This poor boy will catch his death of cold.'

With his own hands the old General rubbed my shivering limbs whilst old Olga went for clothes and brandy. Sitting in an easy chair after a large glass of toddy, I told the Director of my adventures and asked him if I might return to the dormitory that night.

He shook his head.

'Impossible, my boy. If the Bolsheviks were to discover that the Corps had sheltered you, it would be a bad day for us. Up to

the present they have not troubled us much. You know what happened at the Vladimir School ?'

'No, your Excellency. I have had no news at all since I have been in Peter-Paul.'

'Well, they bombarded the School. The Director-General saw that the situation was hopeless and surrendered. Then, when the Bolsheviks had all the officers and Junkers assembled in the courtyard, they butchered them in cold blood. Not one came out alive.'

I could not utter a word. The old man's face was pale as he struggled for composure. Finally :

'You can sleep in the tennis pavilion to-night. Olga will bring you some tea early in the morning. You can wear Alexei's (his son's) clothes. The best thing for you to do is to see Captain Cromie at the British Embassy to-morrow. He may be able to smuggle you through to the Frontier. I will let your mother know what has happened.'

Olga Stepanovna kissed me with tears as we parted the next morning. I had not had a very comfortable night in the tennis pavilion, in spite of the bundle of rugs they had given me. I slipped out and for two hours walked briskly about the streets, trying to look busy and feeling very hungry and strange in mufti. I had not worn civilian clothes since I was a child of ten.

Half-past eight was hardly a decent hour to call at an Embassy ; but at any rate they will not throw me out, thought I.

I pretended the janitor that I was an Englishman : I shouted 'Captain Cromie !' at him very loudly and firmly ; and within a few minutes I was ushered into the presence of the famous naval attaché.

He was still in his pyjamas and dressing-gown. I explained briefly why I had come to him. The tension had relaxed ; the trials of the last few days had told on me and Cromie could see that I was near to breaking down.

He patted me sympathetically on the shoulder.

'What you need most is a good breakfast,' said he.

And I shall never forget that excellent English meal of porridge, bacon and eggs and marmalade. With the kindness and sympathy of a father, he listened to my story and gave me some idea of the political situation. It appeared that the Bolsheviks were well in the saddle and that he did not feel any too safe himself.

'You will have to live in the attic until I can get you off to Murmansk in a few days,' he said ; 'my British servant will bring you your grub. I can't even trust the Russians in the Embassy

now. But I think I can manage to let your mother know that you are safe.'

I was two or three days in the attic of the Embassy, sleeping most of the time and awaking, still hungry, at meal-times. Too exhausted to hope or fear, I waited.

At last I received my instructions. A train would be leaving for Murmansk with a special carriage for the British Mission at 12.55 the next morning. Shortly before midnight, I left the Embassy and took a tram in the Marsovo Polye.

It was packed with Red Guards, wearing pieces of machine-gun belt wound round their shoulders as bandoliers. They were mostly half-drunk, laughing and joking. It was all I could do to assume a mask of incomprehension and indifference. No one took any notice of me.

But if I feared to be identified on the tram, my ordeal at the station was still more nerve-racking. Papers were scrutinized by a passport official, again at the booking-office and once more at the entrance.

To the questions asked of me, I replied stolidly: '*Nie ponimaïou.* Speak English?'

The British Mission carriage was a brightly lit sleeping-car. My first move was to switch out the light in my compartment. I had started to arrange my bedding on one of the bunks, when I heard a woman's footsteps coming down the corridor, pausing, advancing, hesitating. She arrived at the door of my compartment and gazed into the darkness. Some obscure instinct prompted me to reach for the switch and turn on the light. It shone on the face of my sister.

For a few seconds that seemed an eternity we gazed at each other. Tears were rolling down her cheeks. She made no sign of recognition, she did not even touch my hand. Dropping a little packet on the seat of the compartment, she stepped back into the corridor. I never saw her again.

The train moved off; and I turned into my berth without speaking to the other occupant of the compartment, who got in shortly before we left. I did not feel inclined for conversation; nor was it prudent. Behind the curtains of the bunk, I examined the parcel my sister had dropped; it contained a few rings and a packet of cigarettes.

The next morning, to my great relief, I recognised a former cadet of my Corps—three or four years older than myself—also bound for Murmansk in disguise.

We conversed in undertones. At nearly every station there was a long stop; and Red Guards went through the trains examining papers. The British Mission carriage was not exempt.

The fellow-passengers whom we saw from time to time in the corridor were not reassuring. Most of them wore military boots and breeches under their greatcoats. They dodged in and out of their compartments like rabbits, without speaking.

I made up my mind to address one of them in English, which I spoke fluently. My victim was a young man a few years older than myself, with a military bearing.

'Where are you going?' said I.

The poor fellow looked very uncomfortable, but produced a passport similar to my own, signed by Cromie. All our travelling companions were officers bound for Murmansk to join the British forces. One of them had escaped from Kiev, where over 2,000 officers were murdered—tied together in tens and shot down with machine guns. He had taken refuge in the British Vice-Consulate just as the massacre began. The extent and intensity of the Red Terror began to dawn on us.

The journey dragged on. We conversed mostly at night. Whenever we stopped at a station we separated and went forward to the engine to get hot water for tea. The train seldom touched twenty miles an hour on the badly laid single line.

At Petrozavodsk, one coach in a train on the siding was full of cadets of my own Corps, thin, pale, downcast and dirty, heavily guarded. Perhaps they had been caught trying to escape to Murmansk. I withdrew my head from the window hastily; a recognition would not have helped them; it would have been fatal to us.

Our taciturnity in the refreshment rooms at wayside stations, where we sometimes got out to buy beer and provisions, must have seemed strange to the guards of the train; they eyed us with increasing suspicion. By practising broken Russian, some of us managed to achieve a fairly unintelligible jargon that was useful when speaking with the Red Guards; but several times we found them listening by the side of the carriage or in the corridor.

We had been five days in the train when the chief guard came into a compartment where four of us were playing cards.

'You are not *Anglichane* at all,' said he, 'you are Russian *bourgeois*!'

We made him repeat his statement three or four times in the

simplest words before we understood it. The spokesman, producing once more his dog-eared and greasy papers, assured him that we were indeed Englishmen.

The Bolshevik shook his head.

'That's all very well. Your papers may be forgeries. I've heard you talking Russian a damn sight better than you talk it now. We'll see what the Soviet at Kem think of you when we get there. In the meantime you are not to leave the carriage.'

He spat on the floor and walked out with a malicious grin. There was no hope of our satisfying the Soviet at Kem; and we were over five hundred versts from Murmansk and safety.

Tame surrender was out of the question. That night we held a conference and mustered our weapons, which consisted of some half-dozen revolvers.

Our only hope was to drive the train past Kem without stopping. Three officers were told off to clamber over into the engine and compel the driver to carry on. Three more would endeavour to slip the couplings and leave the other carriages of the train behind. The rest were ready to repel any interference.

The tension increased through the next day. At Sorodskaya the guard disappeared into the station-master's office. No one came to check our passports. Back along the train, we could see the heads of Red soldiers looking out of the windows; our carriage was being watched.

We waited for what seemed an eternity. The harsh, high-pitched voices of the men loading wood on the tender rang out strangely in the silence of the snow-bound forest. Not a soul was moving in the little hamlet of log houses. At last the guard emerged and climbed aboard. Once more the train rumbled off slowly over the waste of snow.

Twilight was falling when we saw the domes of Kem on the northern horizon. We took up our posts in silence, drew our concealed pistols and waited. We could see the lights in the houses now. The engine party were about to open the door, when I heard the crack of a rifle. Something dark was fluttering on the track ahead of us; men were standing by the line.

The train slackened speed and jolted to a stop; a private of the Royal Marines clambered into the engine; and a British officer opened the door from which we were about to make our desperate sally.

'Are you the officers from Petrograd?' he asked in English. British troops had occupied Kem two hours before.



## THE 'CORNHILL' LITERARY COMPETITIONS.

### No. 2.

EACH month a LITERARY PROBLEM will be proposed, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful competitors. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prize.

Another prize of the same value will be occasionally offered by the Editor to enable solvers who are not resident in Europe to compete. The conditions of entry will be similar, but a slightly longer time will be allowed for answers. This award is included in the current issue, and there will be a further one in the winter.

For this month's Literary Competition, competitors are invited to submit the quotation which they consider to be the most appropriate to the subject of 'Childhood' taken from any of the works of Charles Dickens.

### RULES.

1. The quotation must be written out in full and the name of the book and the page on which the quotation is found must be given.
2. With his answers every competitor must send the coupon that is printed on page iv. in the preliminary pages of this issue: and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
3. Answers to this competition should be addressed to the Competition Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London W.1, and must arrive not later than September 20. Competitors not resident in Europe will be given a further week's grace.

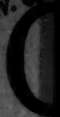
### ANSWERS TO COMPETITION. SERIES I—FLOWERS.

1. Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ii. 1.
2. Tennyson, 'Child Songs,' No. 1. The City Child.
3. A. Dobson, 'At the Sign of the Lyre, A Garden Song.'
4. C. Marlowe, 'The Passionate Shepherd to his Love.'
5. 'Rubáiyát' of Omar Khayyám.
6. H. Vaughan, 'Childhood.'

Acrostic No. 119 ('Nineveh and Tyre'). The prizes are won by Miss C. Bridges, 7 Alexandra Road, Clifton, Bristol, and Major Luard, 14 Wood Lane, Falmouth. Their answers were the two first opened, and they will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.



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